

REASON IN THE WORLD

HEGEL'S METAPHYSICS AND
ITS PHILOSOPHICAL APPEAL



JAMES KREINES

Reason in the World

Reason in the World

Hegel's Metaphysics and Its Philosophical Appeal

JAMES KREINES

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide.

Oxford New York
Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in
Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by
Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

© Oxford University Press 2015

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Kreines, James.
Reason in the world : Hegel's metaphysics and its philosophical appeal / James Kreines.
pages cm
Includes index.
ISBN 978-0-19-020430-3 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770-1831. 2. Metaphysics. I. Title.
B2949.M4K74 2015
193—dc23
2014035884

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2
Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii

Abbreviations ix

Introduction: The Fundamentality of the Metaphysics of Reason 1

PART I PRIMITIVE AND MEDIATE REASONS: IMMANENT CONCEPTS FROM MECHANISM TO TELEOLOGY

1. The Dialectic of Mechanism 35
2. Against Empiricist Metaphysics and for the Concept Thesis
and the Metaphysics of Reason 57
3. Kant's Challenge and Hegel's Defense of Natural Teleology: The
Concept as the Substance of Life 77

PART II THE INESCAPABLE PROBLEM OF COMPLETE REASONS: KANT'S DIALECTIC CRITIQUE OF METAPHYSICS

4. Kant's Dialectic Argument and the Restriction of
Knowledge 113
5. The Opening for Hegel's Response to Kant's Dialectic 136

PART III COMPLETE REASONS: FROM THE IDEA
TO THE ABSOLUTE IDEA

6. Against the Metaphysics of the Understanding and the Final Subject or Substratum 155
7. Insubstantial Holism and the Real Contradiction of the Lawful: Chemism 181
8. The Idea: Complete Reason as Process 199
9. Free Kind for Itself: From the Metaphysics of the Absolute Idea to Epistemological Monism and Idealism 219
10. Method and Conclusion of the *Logic*: Dialectic, Contradiction, and Absolute Knowledge 240

Works Cited 273

Index 279

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A portion of chapter 3 appears as “Kant and Hegel on Teleology and Life from the Perspective of Debates about Free Will” in *The Freedom of Life: Hegelian Perspectives*; I thank Walther König for permission to reprint these parts. I also thank the American Philosophical Society for a generous fellowship at the beginning of this project, and Claremont McKenna College for support and a research sabbatical.

I am tremendously indebted to those who read the whole of the manuscript at various stages, and provided incredibly generous and insightful commentary: Rolf-Peter Horstmann, Paul Hurley, Dean Moyar, Robert Pippin, Paul Redding, Peter Thielke, and Christopher Yeomans. My colleagues in the philosophy departments of Claremont have been a source of support and philosophical stimulation throughout. And many others have helped me with chapters or earlier work, or have otherwise been of great assistance; they include: Mark Alznauer, Ivan Boldyrev, Luca Illetterati, Erick Jiménez, Franz Knappik, Daniel Moerner, Terry Pinkard, Tobias Rosefeldt, and Robert Stern. My heartfelt thanks to all those above; many of them have helped over many years, and have taught me by example whatever I know about the virtues of the collective practice of philosophy. Of course, any errors are my own. I thank my parents, especially for their indefatigable love and encouragement over the very long term. Finally, and yet before all, I thank Jen, Zack, and Cassandra for their love and support; to them, my deepest love and gratitude.

J.K.

ABBREVIATIONS

In the body of this work and in footnotes, I provide page references, first to the German and then to the English editions of primary texts, and I separate pages of the two editions with a slash (/). Below, I indicate the abbreviations I use for the works of Kant and Hegel. I list the translations I have used, which are sparingly modified by removing capitalization of Hegel's terminology in the English, bringing the translations of key terms elsewhere into line with the Cambridge translations of my main texts, and handling some terms (e.g., *Gattung* or *kind*) in a manner consistent with the interpretation of them I defend in the text.

Hegel

References to Hegel's works in German are to the *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970). The *Encyclopedia* is cited by section (§) number, followed, where relevant, by "R" to indicate a "remark" (*Anmerkung*) of Hegel's, or "Z" to indicate an "addition" (*Zusatz*) from Hegel's lectures.

- EG *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*. 1971. Translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Werke* volume 10.
- EL *Encyclopaedia Logic*. 2010. Translated by K. Binkmann and D. O. Dahlstrom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. *Werke* volume 8.
- EN *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*. 1970. Translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Werke* volume 9.

- PhG *Phenomenology of Spirit*. 1977. Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Werke* volume 3.
- PP *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*. 1986. Translated by A. V. Miller. Edited by M. George and A. Vincent. Oxford: Blackwell. *Werke* volume 4.
- PR *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. 1991. Edited by Allen W. Wood, translated by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. *Werke* volume 7.
- VGP *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. 1995. 3 vols. Translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. *Werke* volumes 18–20.
- VPG *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History; Introduction: Reason in History*. 1975. Translated by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. *Werke* volume 12.
- VL *Lectures on Logic, Berlin, 1831*. 2008. Translated by C. Butler. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. *Vorlesungen über die Logik, Berlin 1831*. 2001. Transcribed by K. Hegel. Edited by U. Rameil and H. C. Lucas. Hamburg: Meiner.
- VPA *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. 1975. 3 vols. Translated by T. M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press. *Werke* volumes 13–15.
- VPN *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Natur: Berlin 1819/20: Nachgeschrieben von Johann Rudolf Ringier*. 2002. Edited by M. Bondeli and H. N. Seelmann. Hamburg: Meiner.
- VPR *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. 1962. 3 vols. Translated by E. B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson. New York: Humanities Press. *Werke* volumes 16–17.
- WL *Hegel's Science of Logic*. 2010. Translated by G. di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. *Werke* volumes 5–6.

Kant

I use the translations of Kant's works in the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, citing volume and page number to the Akademie edition (Ak) of Kant's works in German, except with the standard A/B references to the first *Critique*.

- A/B *Critique of Pure Reason*. 1998. Translated by P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ak volumes 3–4.
- Ak *Kants gesammelte Schriften*. 1902–. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

- C *Correspondence*. 1999. Edited and translated A. Zweig. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ak volumes 10–13.
- EE Posthumously published first introduction to *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, by Immanuel Kant. 2000. Translated by P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In Ak volume 20.
- KpV *Critique of Practical Reason*. In: 1996. *Practical Philosophy*. Ed. and trans. M. J. Gregor with introduction by A. W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In Ak volume 5.
- KU *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. 2000. Translated by P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In Ak volume 5.
- P *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as a Science*. In: *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by H. Allison, 29–170. 2010. Translated by G. Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In Ak volume 4.
- TP “On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy.” In *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by H. Allison, 425–446. 2010. Translated by P. Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In Ak volume 8.
- UE “On a Discovery Whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason Is to Be Made Superfluous by an Older One.” In *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by H. Allison, 271–336. 2010. Translated by H. Allison. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In Ak volume 8.

Other

- E Spinoza, *Ethics*. In *A Spinoza Reader*. Translated and edited by Curley, E. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. References to the *Ethics* by part (I–V), proposition (P), definition (D), scholium (S) and corollary (C).

Reason in the World

Introduction

The Fundamentality of the Metaphysics of Reason

A story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end—but not necessarily in that order.

—Jean-Luc Godard

What is the aim or point of metaphysics? What are metaphysicians trying to do when arguing about platonic forms, for example, or materialism? Reflection on the question of aim can seem to encourage skepticism about the enterprise, if it needs any encouragement. For the aim of metaphysics can either seem so hopeless as to make the pursuit incoherent, or else seem to involve dressing up as deep or insightful something that is simplistic, unscientific, and obsolete.

The first worry, about impossibility, will tend to be encouraged when we think of the final aim or point of metaphysics as a special sort of *knowledge*—transcending the ordinary sort, or superior in kind. We might think here of Aristophanes' depiction of Socrates, suspended in a basket and explaining:

Never could I make correct celestial discoveries except by thus suspending my mind, and mixing my subtle head with the air . . . for the earth by natural force draws unto itself the quickening moisture of thought. (1993, 30)

Metaphysics can seem to seek, as it were, a kind of knowledge that is entirely freed from the influence of gravity. There can be different ways of spelling this out. Perhaps the idea will be that, while ordinary knowledge might be more or less abstract, the knowledge sought by metaphysics is somehow absolutely

abstract. Or, while ordinary knowledge might need to be free of perspectival distortions in many respects, the knowledge sought by metaphysics would be somehow absolutely perspective-free, akin to seeing but from absolutely no point of view. Or perhaps the special knowledge would be supposed to possess features required for a foundational, ultimate justification of all other knowledge: perhaps this will require infallibility, timelessness, immediate certainty, etc. Any such conception would seem to render the pursuit vulnerable to the simple epistemological worry that the unique sort of knowledge at stake is impossible for us. And if the whole and final point is knowledge distinct not just in degree but in kind from anything we can have, then the pursuit can seem pointless.

One could alternatively try to deny that metaphysics can be understood in terms of a pursuit of a special kind of knowledge, but this can encourage the second kind of worry above: metaphysics will seem to be in more or less the same business as the natural sciences, and by comparison comically inept. Here we might think of the famous joke in Molière:

I am asked by the learned doctor for the cause and reason that opium makes one sleep. To this I reply that there is a dormitive virtue in it, whose nature it is to make the senses drowsy.¹

The threat is that metaphysics will seem like this pronouncement, and just a kind of pretentious rattling on about a question, until the natural sciences actually establish knowledge of a real answer.

Prospects for theoretical philosophy, more generally, might then seem to require that we effect a shift, reorientation, or revolution. This might seem to require that we come to view everything through the lens of different and more reflective questions, such as: How, if at all, can we have *knowledge*? How can our thoughts be *about* anything at all? How can any claims or theories be *meaningful* for us? What are the conditions of the possibility of the normative character of our *concept use*? Some might see such a reoriented theoretical philosophy as replacing metaphysics; others as saving a descendent of metaphysics, placing this on newly secure footing.

But attention to Hegel, I argue, gives us reason to think that these initial grounds for skepticism are insufficient, and the suggested remedy unnecessary and distortive. Metaphysics, at its best, has always had a point or aim of compelling philosophical interest. Further, it may be more philosophically promising to reorient ourselves by looking at philosophy

¹ From *Le Malade Imaginaire*, translation from Hutchison (1991).

generally—including the more reflective questions about knowledge, meaning, and so on—rather through the lens of a more basic concern with metaphysics, once we have a better understanding of this.

What then is the aim or point of this metaphysics? Hegel's view is that metaphysics, at its best, addresses the most general and direct questions about *why* or *because* of things; it concerns what Hegel calls "reason" (*Vernunft*) or "the rational" (*das Vernünftige*) "in the world."² The topic is not at base epistemological; it is not, for example, about our practices of giving and asking for reasons in the sense of justifications for beliefs or actions. It is the metaphysical topic of the explanatory reasons why things do what they do, or are as they are. This is what I call the *metaphysics of reason*. The basic aim or point here is not perspective-free knowledge, a priori knowledge, or the like. We cannot understand metaphysics by thinking first in terms of a special kind of *knowledge*. We must begin with the specific topic: reason in the world. Only then might we be able to go on to consider what distinctive methods or forms of knowledge might be required by this. So the first worry, above, goes awry from the start. Arguments about materialism, for example, would then be arguments about whether matter must be the ultimate form of reason in the world, or the reason for everything that has a reason, so that all legitimate explanation must ultimately appeal to matter.

Granted, the idea of the metaphysics of reason seems to bring us right back into the teeth of the worry about obsolescence. After all, modern natural science has met incredible success at discovering the why of things. For example, it has produced much insight into the laws of nature. But here Hegel has a powerful case. He argues that we tend to allow the great successes of natural science to blind us to further metaphysical questions. Take discoveries about the laws of nature, for example. Hegel praises such discoveries for their role in dispelling superstitions like astrology.³ And he holds that these discoveries help us to pose more determinate or less abstract metaphysical questions about reason in the world.⁴ But these discoveries still raise questions which they cannot answer, and which require a different method or approach than that of the natural sciences. They raise questions like these: What is it to be a law of nature? And, more generally, what is it to be a reason or why for things, such that the laws of nature should qualify as one form of this? And does the

² See (e.g., EL §24), and similar at (WL 5:45); (VPG 12:23 and 422); (VGP 18:369, 19:262). On the importance of reason in the world, I am especially influenced by Horstmann (e.g., 1991, 175ff.) and Beiser (e.g., 2003). In some respects I interpret this point differently. And I follow it to conclusions both would reject.

³ E.g., VGP 19:319/2:297.

⁴ E.g., EL §9R and §12R.

general theory of reason tell us anything more about the status of laws, such as whether they can serve as an ideal paradigm case, against which the completeness of other forms of reason in the world might be measured? Could laws of nature even possibly serve as such a standard of completeness? Or is there some sense in which there must necessarily be a yet more complete form of reason in the world? Metaphysics, then, is more precisely distinguished at base by the generality and directness with which its questions address the topic of reason, and especially the completeness of reason in the world.

Hegel's project in the famously difficult *Science of Logic*⁵ is then easy to explain, if we simplify a little: He aims to take the metaphysics of reason as seriously as possible, distinguish it from other pursuits with which it is easily confused, and carry it through as absolutely as possible. Hegel will argue that this road leads to surprising conclusions. For example, the laws of nature (Hegel argues) cannot possibly be anything but an extremely incomplete form of reason in the world; teleology sets the standard or measure of completeness of reason in the world, and has in this sense metaphysical priority.

But that story is too simple to provide a complete point of departure. For it suggests that, on Hegel's view, the development of philosophy has never uncovered any good reasons to be critical of such metaphysics. And it suggests that older metaphysical projects—Aristotle's, for example—face no threat from any such criticism. But Hegel holds a different position. And we can find Hegel difficult to understand not only because we not only worry too much, in the above ways, about metaphysics; there is also a sense in which we can worry too little about metaphysics. For Hegel takes *Kant's* critique of metaphysics as seriously as it could be taken. In particular, there is an important respect in which Kant's critique of metaphysics differs from the purely epistemological worry, with which I began above: Kant supports his worries with the argument of the Transcendental Dialectic of the first *Critique*. This is not merely an attack on metaphysics from a foreign territory, such as the domain of epistemology. Rather, Kant here brings the fight to the opponent's turf, showing that metaphysics—characterized charitably as a pursuit of necessary and rational interest—nonetheless generates contradictions insofar as it is inevitably guided by a concern of “reason” (*Vernunft*) with completeness, or “the unconditioned,” calling *itself* into question. The result is supposed to force the conclusion that our knowledge is severely limited, and that metaphysics is impossible for us. Those who would understand Hegel must not only move out of consideration the less forceful worries about metaphysics, with which

⁵ My main focus throughout is the *Logic*; see §1.6.

I began; they must also appreciate why this Kantian attack is so much more serious.

So it is the Transcendental Dialectic critique of metaphysics, I will argue, that Hegel makes so central to his project. He takes this to have shown that previous forms of metaphysics, however helpful they might be on specific points, are unacceptably naïve with respect to the threatened internal conflicts. This is what Hegel is referring to when he says that an “elevation of reason to the loftier spirit of modern philosophy in fact rests” on “the insight into the *necessary conflict*” (WL 5:38–39/25–26). Hegel means to go so far in remedying the naïveté, or in following Kant’s insight, as to hold that “the dialectic makes up the very nature of thinking,” and “a cardinal aspect of logic” (EL §11R). But Hegel will also argue that Kant’s Dialectic argument justifies neither Kant’s epistemic limit, nor the impossibility of metaphysics. Rather, the conflicts Kant uncovers can and should be harnessed in the systematic reconstruction of a new form of the metaphysics of reason. And *this* is the more complete and distinctive organizing focus, which will send Hegel in such unusual and difficult directions: he seeks to systematically rebuild the best of metaphysics on the basis of considerations drawn from the most powerful criticism of metaphysics.

We can then understand in these terms why Hegel’s end or goal should require a distinctive, “dialectical” method—one which involves uncovering and learning the right lessons from contradictions, which aims to demonstrate via these contradictions a systematic unity of knowledge, and which turns out to be independent of experience in a specific respect.⁶ And we can understand in these same terms the substance of Hegel’s conclusions, including an especially unusual combination of two features. The first is Hegel’s metaphysical ambitiousness: he does not aim for modesty by proceeding only via reflective questions about knowledge, intentionality, or meaning; nor does he limit himself to ontology or what there is; he aims to discern what is metaphysically prior to what, and ultimately to show that there is something metaphysically “absolute.” But the second feature is Hegel’s wholesale rejection of metaphysical foundationalism, whether scientific, theistic, or any other form. By foundationalism, I mean views on which there is something—whether transcendent or immanent—that depends on nothing while being the reason for itself and for everything real.⁷ Hegel, by contrast, seeks a metaphysical absolute that is not a foundation.

⁶ I thank Robert Stern for pressing me on this point.

⁷ Some argue that Hegel is not a metaphysical foundationalist in a different, narrower sense—that he rejects transcendent or separate grounds or foundations. See, e.g., Houlgate (1999).

Hegel's project, then, is not best understood as an attempt to modify Kant's own positive project in theoretical philosophy; it is not, for example, best understood as completing or radicalizing Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the conceptual conditions of the possibility of cognition of objects—or, alternatively, of the normative character of our concepts, our practices of giving and asking for reasons in the epistemological sense of justifications, or similar.⁸ It has more to do with the project Kant describes but in the Dialectic but does not pursue as his own positive project, given his criticisms of it. Nor is Hegel's project best understood as a defense of a form of metaphysical foundationalism modified from Spinoza's monism, according to which one all-encompassing substance depends on nothing else and provides a reason for everything.⁹ These kinds of interpretations can be developed in powerful ways, generating important insights—many of which I hope to incorporate here. But I will argue that the best way to understand Hegel's *Logic* is to think from the beginning of everything finding a place in context of a more distinctive organizing focus, namely, the aim of turning Kant's Dialectic critique of metaphysics toward the end of the systematic reconstruction of metaphysics, now in the form of a non-foundationalist metaphysics of reason.

This approach allows us to avoid the temptation to assimilate Kant and Hegel; we can avoid taking them both to pursue the same kind of project, whether this is metaphysical or not. And yet it allows us to do so without treating one or the other merely as a foil who gets the philosophy simply and clearly wrong. It allows us to find forceful arguments on competing sides in a disagreement that will extend all the way to the nature of philosophy itself. And the same approach allows us to see how one focus can unify the seemingly disparate discussions at the end of Hegel's *Logic* and render them immune to prominent worries about them, such as the concern that Hegel cannot come to any closure that is immune to skeptical worries or that provides an ultimate justification for all knowledge. Or so I will argue here, with the aim of

⁸ The version in Pippin (1989) satisfies many of my interpretive desiderata: On this account, Hegel does take as “basic to his project” specific issues with a unifying “common theme”—“the argument that any subject must be able to make certain basic discriminations in any experience in order for there to be experience at all” (7–8). There is an argument from here to a criticism of Kant's denial of our knowledge of things in themselves. This approach does not preclude recognition that Hegel draws metaphysical conclusions. And it is not sufficient to argue, against this approach, that Hegel is *also* interested in other, more traditionally metaphysical pursuits; resting content with an “also” formulation cannot match the advantage of the unified project Pippin finds in Hegel. Still, I think that many of the virtues here can be preserved, if we start fresh and set everything in context of a different reading of the unifying focus of Hegel's project; only in this way can we get to Hegel's distinctive metaphysics of reason.

⁹ On Hegel as modifying Spinoza's monism, see especially Horstmann (1990, 12ff.) and Beiser (1993, 4ff.). I follow both in many other respects.

defending a new interpretation of Hegel's project in his *Science of Logic*—while arguing as well that both Kant's Dialectic and Hegel's response are often powerful, and that attending to them can still help us to better understand ongoing philosophical debates concerning everything from metaphysics to the philosophy of science to the very nature of philosophy.

0.1 Metaphysics, Explanation, and Organizing Focus

I do not draw my usage of terms like “metaphysics” from recent debates about Hegel, because opposed sides in those debates use such terms differently (see Kreines 2006). So I will first give an independent explanation of my terms, before arguing that this usage provides the best way to understand Hegel.

To begin with, I noted above a conception of “metaphysics” as focused on the *why* or the *reason* in terms of which things can be explained. My grounds for thinking that this is the best way to understand Hegel will concern Kant's account of reason (*Vernunft*) and the ideas of pure reason, and the way Hegel responds to Kant with his own account of reason and what he calls “the idea.” But before turning to that interpretive case, I should explain more completely what I mean by the “metaphysics of reason.” In effect, I am using the notion of *explanation* as a window through which to view and make sense of this philosophical terrain. Part of what makes the notion so useful is that it is, I will argue, partly metaphysical and partly epistemological. But the metaphysical side can be initially more difficult to see, and is more important at the start. Perhaps the best way to introduce this side is to note that the notion of explanation, while it may be contextual in some ways, also needs some worldly constraint, or something which does not vary with the different subjective interests or beliefs of different audiences; it needs this, I will argue, to make sense of how astrology, phrenology, and the like all fail to explain, regardless of whether some audiences may mistake them for explanatory. It can help us today to see the point to note twentieth century positivist accounts of this constraint on explanation, using terms supposed to free it from metaphysical issues. This is an account that is epistemic, in the sense that an explanation is supposed to be a kind of *argument* or *justification*, showing that the event to be explained “was to be expected” given premises concerning antecedent conditions and a universal generalization.¹⁰ This will connect explanation closely with prediction, for we can infer from similar premises what to expect in the future. But one famous

¹⁰ Following Railton (1989, 221), citing Hempel's famous formulation.

problem is that explanatory relevance sometimes looks asymmetric precisely where the epistemology of such arguments and predictions can be symmetric. For example, we might have knowledge of universal generalizations that would allow us to infer from observed surface features of gold to conclusions about its microstructure. And here we might equally already know about the microstructure of gold and draw from the same generalizations conclusions about its surface features. Either might well be equally good as an *epistemic reason* for a conclusion or prediction about the other. But the explanatory link seems, at least, to go only one way: the microstructure of gold seems to be responsible for its surface features; but it does not seem right to say that gold has the microstructure it does because of its surface features, or that appeal to the surface features could explain why it has a certain microstructure.¹¹

If you find this to be a problem for positivism, then you could add a bit of metaphysics. Some would be tempted to do so by requiring that explaining something must involve identifying a *cause* of it, where causation is asymmetric and raises metaphysical issues because it cannot be reduced to the epistemological terms above. But I would not want to start with assumptions about all explanation being causal, or any priority of the specifically causal.¹² So I note an alternative approach: We might instead just introduce a notion meant to be a beginning for further investigation, holding that explaining some *Y* requires (also, in addition to any other requirements, contextual or otherwise) identifying some *X* that is *responsible* for *Y*, or such that *Y* is *because* of *X*, or—best for my purposes here—such that *X* is a *reason* for *Y*. This relation of *being a reason for* would be worldly, irreducible to the epistemic terms (like those proposed by positivists), and could as well be asymmetric in cases like the above. Setting aside for now defense of this, the point is just to explain what I mean by *reason in the world*. It would be the metaphysical side, as it were, of the notion of explanation. Or, it would be precisely the element which eludes positivist attempts at non-metaphysical accounts of explanation. This is the point of my stress on the idea of *reason in the world*; the idea is not to privilege world over mind; minds can be in the world and might be the reasons why some things happen as they do; the point is to single out the idea of *explanatory reason* (the *why* or *because*) as opposed to *epistemic reasons* (as, for example, where we have the practice of asking for reasons, in the sense of a justifications, for claims one has made).¹³

¹¹ See, e.g., Kitcher: “asymmetries in explanation cast a shadow” (1986, 203) on this positivist program; he interprets Kant in light of this problem.

¹² Compare Kim’s “metaphysical dependence,” which is not necessarily causal: “dependence relations of various kinds serve as objective correlates of explanations” (1994, 67).

¹³ Compare Pippin distinguishing the issues of “what gets counted as ‘occurring in nature or not,’” from “what gets counted as a sufficient explanation,” claiming “there is no necessary

Of course, it will be the job of physics to try to explain this or that physical phenomenon. Metaphysics, again, would be concerned with more direct pursuit of more general underlying questions, without the domain restriction: Why should we consider causation a form of reason in the world? Are there other forms, as Hegel, for example, distinguishes in the *Logic* between teleological and non-teleological forms of reason? And, ultimately, how can we understand not just the reasons for this or that but *reason* in the sense of a complete form of explanatory relevance? And so on. And that is:

Metaphysics (of reason) = Philosophical inquiry into explanatory reasons, or reason in the world, and ultimately into their completeness.

I will argue that both Kant and Hegel have something like this notion: Kant argues, roughly, that our epistemic limits prevent answering the questions of most direct interest within a metaphysics of reason; Hegel defends answers.

It is also true that both can have occasion to use the term “metaphysics” in other ways as well. We could even find a sense in which Kant defends “metaphysics” and another in which Hegel rejects it.¹⁴ Similarly, Hegel criticizes some notions that may seem similar to that of reason in the world. He criticizes the notion of “ground” (*Grund*). And he criticizes a kind of arguing or “reasoning” (*Räsonnement*) about such grounds. But I will read him as arguing here that “ground” is simply an inadequate way of understanding the fundamental topic of “reason” (*Vernunft*) in the world.¹⁵ And of course Hegel says much more about reason: for example, it is “negative and *dialectical*” and “[i]n its truth reason is . . . *spirit*” (WL 5:16–17/10). But these are further conclusions; understanding the arguments for them requires first understanding the basic idea of the metaphysics of reason. And none of the terminological complexities should cloud or muddy the sense of the organizing focus of either Kant’s Transcendental Dialectic or Hegel’s positive project in the *Logic*. For the one simple sense of “metaphysics,” connected with explanatory reason, is most important to both Kant’s Dialectic and to Hegel’s theoretical philosophy, and brings bring into sharpest focus the broadest disagreement between them. So interpretive use of the term in this way, in this context, is not a matter of arbitrary choice.

connection between the latter and the former issue” (2002, 70). I disagree on this score, and will argue that the point is crucial for interpreting Hegel.

¹⁴ For example, Kant sometimes uses the term in an epistemological sense, to refer to a pursuit of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. And Hegel sometimes uses the term for the specifically pre-Kantian rationalist metaphysics, which he rejects.

¹⁵ See §1.3 and §2.1.

Some might see the above as an Aristotelian conception of metaphysics, and I have some sympathy with this proposal. But, first, care should be taken with the idea that Hegel's project is Aristotelian, because of the way in which Kant's Dialectic argument is crucial for Hegel. This will be the reason why Hegel holds that philosophy must take the form of a system, in which everything relates to something absolute, or to a complete form of reason; and Hegel, for all his acknowledged debts, thinks this systematicity is lacking in Aristotle (e.g., VGP 19:133/2:118). Second, there are simply too many conflicting readings of Aristotle to sort out here. So I will seek to avoid assumptions about Aristotle and to explain Hegel and his relation to Kant as clearly and directly as I can.

An objection to the idea of understanding metaphysics in the manner I propose is that it should rather be understood in epistemic terms, in terms of an ultimate aim for a priori knowledge. For otherwise (the objection goes) it would provide knowledge only of how things happen to be, as a matter of pure contingency. But note that this objection does not really understand the *ultimate point* of metaphysics in terms of the a priori, but rather in terms of necessity and contingency. Further, while Kant might seek to rest a lot of weight on a basic dualism between the a posteriori and the a priori, claiming that any knowledge of necessity requires the latter, Hegel need not and does not follow; Hegel can recognize that even empirical sciences can have knowledge of at least a kind of necessity—they can know, for example, how the earth would necessarily move differently, if it had twice the mass. Finally, we will find that understanding Hegel's conclusions about necessity, and how his philosophical method ultimately claims to be independent of experience, will require understanding this in terms of the more basic aims of a metaphysics of reason.

Others might object that a view is "metaphysical" only if it posits some higher, otherworldly standard to which humanity is responsible, or to which we should aspire. But I see here rather a basic question about reason: is there some otherworldly reason why we should act in a certain way, or should have certain aspirations? Insofar as it is agreed that an affirmative answer is metaphysical, I think it best to describe the question itself as metaphysical. And then we should take all different answers to express different metaphysical views, or different views about reason.

Others might worry: To make sense of a concern with reason being *metaphysical*, one would have to say more about what reason is, or where it is, as it were. For example, if the reason for things were found in the regularities with which physical events unfold, then this might seem to locate reason in the world and explain why it is a metaphysical topic. My answer is this: Such attempts are reductionist and misconstrue reason rather than locating it. Hegel rather takes the notion of reason in the world as basic and then systematically *rethinks*

everything on that basis—everything from the natures of the physical events mentioned above to causality, universals, nature of substance, etc. Part of the point is that none of these should be taken as given, and then reason located relative to them; all need new accounts in terms of reason in the world. We can compare the way some philosophers today appeal to “normativity.” One question is whether this is reducible to the non-normative. But even among those who agree on irreducibility, there is a further question of whether one should make normativity the fundamental focus of philosophy, seeking to understand everything else in those terms. But I argue that no such terms, whatever else they might promise, offer the best way to begin to approach Hegel’s project in the *Logic*. For Hegel takes explanatory reason as the fundamental focus, and looks at everything else in that light. He seeks to push as far as possible in this metaphysical direction, taking us through the looking glass and into surprising conclusions. For example, my example of microstructure, above, can seem to suggest that the metaphysics of reason would lead naturally to a priority of parts to whole, and a priority of the objects of natural science. But Hegel will argue that carefully following the same questions about reason *further* leads to metaphysical holism, and a rejection of scientism. We cannot understand Hegel if we recoil from the metaphysical issues, because we expect them to lead only to scientism, atomism, or some other non-Hegelian destination; a good part of what Hegel is all about is showing that carrying through with the metaphysical issues reverses our expectations.

Having now more properly introduced my use of the term “metaphysics,” I turn to my notion of an “organizing focus.” Consider a simplified example: Imagine a philosopher of language—call her PL. The organizing focus of her project is to provide a comprehensive account of the nature and possibility of linguistic meaning. This project leads her into many different kinds of issues elsewhere, including some issues concerning the empirical science of psychology. PL can traverse these issues without her project becoming disorganized. She need not get bogged down trying to solve *all* problems in the philosophy of science; those concerning quantum mechanics, for example, may well be irrelevant for her purposes. She addresses some specific issues in the philosophy of science insofar as these are raised and shaped by her basic problem in the philosophy of language.

Organizing focus is crucial in philosophical interpretation. Imagine a philosopher of science reading PL. And he comes to the conclusion that her project fails. For (he believes) she gets much right about empirical psychology, but then completely fails to follow up on the implications concerning quantum mechanics, thus failing to find the best comprehensive solution to the problems of the philosophy of science. It seems to me that this might well be a misinterpretation, caused by the assumption that the two pursue similar

philosophical projects. But PL is not aiming for a comprehensive philosophy of science and may well make no arguments that commit her to providing one. If so, then you cannot understand what PL is doing without understanding her organizing focus on language. Even where she does discuss the philosophy of science, you cannot understand her point—understanding which questions she does and does not ask about this, and why—without understanding how it is all shaped by an organizing focus lying elsewhere. So our philosopher of science and PL might agree on some specific *claims* (for example, about empirical psychology). But it is a mistake to think, for this or any other reason, that they are engaged in similar philosophical *projects*. In general, there will likely always be some similarities in the claims of any two philosophers; but most of them will have the potential to mislead us about the crucial underlying question of organizing focus.

With respect to Hegel, then, there is a crucial question about his organizing focus. He may agree on some specific *claims* with some recent epistemologist (or, alternatively, some twentieth-century linguistic-turn project in philosophy, etc.). But he does not pursue a similar *project*. This is not to claim that Hegel is doing *only* metaphysics, and *not* epistemology or anything else. My point is that Hegel's basic aim is to provide a positive and comprehensive metaphysics of reason—not to provide a comprehensive epistemology, or a comprehensive philosophy of language, or similar. Hegel's metaphysical project will sometimes raise and shape specific epistemological issues, which he must resolve. So understanding what the *Logic* is doing—even when it is discussing epistemology—will require attention to the organizing focus on the metaphysics of reason.

Some might wonder: why can't Hegel's project be both a metaphysics and equally *also* an epistemological refutation of skepticism, with both aims being equally fundamental? Or both a radicalized transcendental deduction in epistemology and equally *also* an Aristotelian metaphysics? But consider one story that the proponent of an "also" might tell: Hegel (the story would go) advocates a kind of holism, which takes everything to be constituted by its relations with everything else, so that metaphysics and epistemology are thus interrelated. But this holism would unify Hegel's project via a view in metaphysics, as I have defined it: everything would be part of the *reason* why everything else is what it is. The general point is this: Hegel aims for a systematic unity of his project; we should try to make sense of this, and so if possible to get beyond a mere "also" formulation; and I argue it is possible, but only if we recognize Hegel's taking the metaphysics of reason as basic and giving unity and surprising philosophical strength to the *Logic*'s engagement with epistemological and many other varied topics.

0.2 Epistemology-First Metaphilosophy

It can be natural for us to think philosophy *should* or even *must* have an organizing focus that is more epistemological. In short, one might reason as follows: Philosophy will always involve making claims. But these claims will be subject to skeptical worries. So philosophy should take as a prior aim an account of justification or knowledge, and then proceed to address any other issues in light of this epistemology. Thus, philosophy should take epistemology as basic, or—as I will also put it here—as “fundamental”; or, philosophy should take the form of an “epistemology-first” project, in this sense. Note that this would be a kind of “metaphilosophical” commitment, since it concerns priority in relations between subdomains of philosophy itself.

This way of thinking suggests something about Hegel, namely, that if he is not thus committed to a priority of epistemology, then this would be a decisive defect. In Ameriks’s (1992, 177) memorable terms, otherwise divergent readings of Hegel tend to agree that any “rehabilitation” of his theoretical philosophy would require reading him as, at base, an “epistemologist.”

I do not mean to burden the epistemology-first view of philosophy itself with any unnecessary and unattractive commitments or to confine it within artificially narrow bounds. There could be many ways of advancing such a view and many differences between them. For example, there is no reason that such a project could not also address metaphysical issues: it could address them in light of the epistemology it takes as basic.

But Hegel’s project (I argue) is no kind of epistemology-first endeavor, and this is not a defect. In order to provide a preliminary indication of reasons for thinking this, I will give a preview—not, yet, a defense—of what I take to be Hegel’s argument against arguments for the epistemology-first way of thinking: Those arguments require a premise that philosophy should not operate on a given domain until it gains independent and more fundamental assurance about the possibility of knowledge (or justification, etc.) on that domain. But, if so, then we should worry equally about philosophy addressing the domain of epistemology until and unless we somehow gain independent assurance about the possibility of knowledge on *that* domain. We could then never gain the needed independent assurance and never begin to philosophize. Insofar as we are going to begin, Hegel argues, such considerations give us no reason to privilege epistemology. The epistemology-first reasoning “is as incoherent as the Scholastic’s wise resolution to learn to *swim, before he ventured into the water*” (EL §10R).

This argument has a surprising generality. For example, some might pursue epistemology by some kind of introspective psychology. Others might prefer

social epistemology. But if we really should not make claims on any domain prior to considering the possibility of knowledge there, then this should apply to the epistemological domain as well, either way.

And there is another sense of generality here as well. Instead of issues concerning the family of concepts including justification and knowledge, consider issues concerning intentionality or aboutness. One way to refer to these is as issues in “semantics.”¹⁶ It is easy to see how one might try to argue that the issues in semantics should be prior to the epistemological issues above: only *if* there is aboutness (one might argue) can issues *then* arise concerning whether our claims amount to knowledge of what they are about. Some might see an advantage here: perhaps taking as basic a problem about skepticism will encourage ever more skepticism; one might argue that recognizing semantics as basic would undercut skepticism, showing that it makes semantic assumptions to which it is not entitled.¹⁷ This is what I will call a *semantics-first* line of thought: philosophy should take its orienting focus from semantic issues about intentionality, and it should rethink other issues (e.g., skepticism about knowledge) specifically in that light.

This might be very different than the concern with skepticism, above, in any number of ways. And again there might be many importantly different versions, including those which address metaphysics in light of prior issues in semantics. But I do not think that the project of Hegel’s *Logic* is semantics-first. Note, in particular, that Hegel’s swimming argument, if it has force in application to any target at all, is general enough to apply also to the case for semantics-first way of thinking. One could argue that we should not make claims on any domain—like the claims of the skeptic, for example—without considering how such claims can be *about* their supposed objects. But then we would also have to worry about discussing semantics, without having shown how aboutness is possible there. And then philosophy could never begin. Granted, I have not defended the swimming argument yet (see chapter 5). But I only mean for now to sow a seed of doubt: perhaps Hegel is not pursuing any instance of the type of project to which his own complaint would apply; it is worth considering, then, a different approach.

We can contrast issues concerning knowledge and justification as “narrowly epistemological,” as opposed to “semantic” issues. But we can also, in order to collect together the kinds of projects to which the swimming argument would apply, call all of these issues “broadly epistemological,” or—as I will use such terms, simply for the sake of concision—“epistemological.” These issues all concern the status of having aboutness and other statuses which might depend

¹⁶ I follow, throughout this paragraph, Brandom (2002, 23–24).

¹⁷ For an application of this idea to a reading of Hegel, see Redding (2007, 222).

on it, such as the status of amounting to knowledge about something. So under the heading of “epistemology-first,” from now on, I include projects which give priority to knowledge/justification and those which give priority to semantics.

Of course, I argue that Hegel takes as fundamental not semantics, but the metaphysics of reason. The idea will be that, whenever we philosophize, on any domain, we are pursuing metaphysical issues about what is the prior reason for what. True, some might claim to be indifferent to such metaphysics, but Hegel sees this as a “delusion.”¹⁸ Issues concerning (explanatory) reason can then be seen throughout philosophy and its history, including in epistemology. For if an epistemology aims to *explain* either the possibility of knowledge or of aboutness, then this too is a way of asking about what is the prior explanatory reason on that domain. The important point for understanding Hegel, however, is that there is no privilege of any epistemological domain over issues about reasons everywhere else—including issues about essences, forms, materialism, and so on. So the basic task is not to restrict ourselves to one case, but to face the issues in their full generality, learning how best to think about reason in the world.

0.3 We Should Not Approach Kant in Exclusively Epistemology-First Terms

There are some parts of Kant that might well, when narrowly considered, be epistemology-first. One part that could be given an epistemology-first reading is Kant’s famous discussion, in the B-Preface of the first *Critique*, of a Copernican revolution in philosophy. Here Kant seems to express a metaphilosophical commitment in terms of an organizing narrative of the history of philosophy: “[u]p to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects”; progress requires rather “assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition” (Bxvi). One possible and broadly epistemology-first reading would be this: Kant here takes as fundamental and inescapable a broadly epistemological question of whether objects must conform to our cognition or vice-versa; Kant argues that previous philosophers, even if not explicitly addressing this question, have at least implicitly relied on a pre-revolutionary answer to it, so that all philosophies are either for or against the revolution.

For those who think at base in these terms, the basic orienting options for Hegel can seem to be whether his main point is to advance or to reverse Kant’s

¹⁸ On this delusion in empiricism, see EL §38R; compare in Kant Ax, and Stern (2009, 4-5).

Copernican revolution.¹⁹ They might ask, in other terms: does Hegel think that world must conform to mind, or vice versa? Some might take this to be the question of whether Hegel aims to revolt against or to revive “metaphysics.” But I note these options in order to emphasize that I defend neither. When I say that Hegel pursues metaphysics, I do not mean that his basic point is to give an anti-Kantian answer to the Copernican question about our cognition. Nor that it is to borrow and extend Kant’s answer. Nor that it is to somehow combine both answers. All such approaches take the broadly epistemological issues about the relation between our cognition and its objects as fundamental. And Hegel will deny this. This is also not to say that Hegel’s project is like a quietism that would unask or dissolve the questions of philosophy. Rather, he takes the basic questions of philosophy—for which he aims to defend constructive answers—to lie elsewhere.

But even in Kant there are some arguments that should definitely not be thought of as epistemology-first, lest we rob them of some of their power. Consider the way in which the B-Preface distinguishes two main overarching lines of argument in the first *Critique*. The first strand argues that we can make progress in achieving synthetic *a priori* knowledge only if we assume the revolutionary position that objects must correspond to our cognition (Bxvi–xix). But this first strand of argument carries an implication that remains, for all that argument tells us, “very strange” and in need of further support; it implies that we “can never get beyond the boundaries of possible experience” (Bxix). Here Kant is clear that his restriction of our knowledge is not adequately supported immediately by common sense or the like; it is supposed to be a surprising philosophical commitment in need of further defense. So Kant promises a second overarching strand of argument, found in the Transcendental Dialectic. Here Kant argues that our thinking, guided by reason, must come into conflict with itself, and that the only appropriate response to the conflict is to draw the conclusion that our knowledge is indeed limited to the bounds of possible experience (Bxx–xxii).²⁰ What Kant is recognizing here is that his critique of metaphysics will be more powerful if he does not always employ arguments *from* epistemological concerns; it will be more powerful if it can bring the

¹⁹ See Pippin’s (1989, 16) framing the basic question of whether Hegel regresses to pre-critical metaphysics or extends the idealist revolution, preferring the latter answer; an important twist on the idea of Hegel as a Copernican revolutionary is Redding (1996). On the other side, Westphal (1989b, 101) takes the same frame in portraying Hegel as offering a “counter-revolution” of “epistemological realism.”

²⁰ Following Ameriks: “it is the Dialectic which nails down the strong claim that our (objective theoretical) knowledge is absolutely limited” (1985, 3). And Pinkard (2011, 92), Rohlf (2010, 190).

challenge directly to the home turf of the metaphysician. And I will argue that Kant is right about this. If we insist on exclusively understanding Kant in a manner that takes as a premise his epistemology or even just a priority or authority of epistemological concerns, we will miss some of the importance and force of the Dialectic.

0.4 The Transcendental Dialectic Critique and the Faculty of Reason

Introducing this other strand of critique requires some explanation of the thread running through the Transcendental Dialectic: the account of “the faculty of reason.” Kant argues elsewhere that the understanding and sensibility make possible objectively valid judgments. But the Dialectic argues that we require also a goal to guide or regulate this use of our other theoretical faculties. The faculty of reason is supposed to provide this, insofar as it provides a distinctive aim or interest. To begin with, we are interested, insofar as we are rational, in discovering conditions or grounds for anything conditioned or grounded. Kant keeps his theory of reason in contact with the more traditional idea that reason is responsible for drawing inferences from premises to conclusions.²¹ But his account of reason brings metaphysics into its scope by extending the focus, in two senses: First, Kant focuses on cases in which a result is known, and what reason guides us to do is not to seek what follows from it, but to seek the conditions from which it follows. Second, this interest is not limited to anything like relations among sentences, but concerns the grounds or conditions of objects.²² For example, given knowledge of an object in space, reason takes an interest in its conditions in the sense of its parts, and in this way Kant’s account of reason brings within its scope well-known metaphysical consideration of just such issues. In sum, reason’s basic interest is explanation and ultimately completeness of explanation.²³ Hegel, adding his own twist, will use the term “reason” not only for this interest but also for its object: reason in the world or the rational. But the proposal in Kant, for now, is that the faculty of reason provides an interest in avoiding incurious satisfaction with the surface of things; it demands that we instead assume for the sake of inquiry that things have further explanations and seek to find the

²¹ See Rohlf (2010, 206) on Kant’s relation to the tradition.

²² See Proops (2010, 455) especially on “conditions” or “grounds,” in Kant and his sources, as that to which we can appeal in answering why-questions.

²³ On explanation as the interest, see also Grier (2001, 145), Allison (2004, 331).

conditions or grounds because of which things do what they do and are as they are.²⁴

Kant argues, however, that difficulties arise specifically because this is not quite yet an adequate conception of reason's interest; reason is concerned at base with "the unconditioned." I will defend this argument below, but for now I offer a sketch: However dissatisfied reason might be with knowledge of something with some feature that suggests it is merely conditioned, the same dissatisfaction would persist with knowledge of an underlying condition that shares that same feature, suggesting it is further conditioned. So conditions must be of interest only insofar as they seem to promise to be steps along the way to some *complete* series of conditions or reasons, itself a *complete explainer*, or the unconditioned.²⁵

Kant will argue that we cannot have knowledge of anything unconditioned.²⁶ But he cannot so argue merely on grounds of a *premise* about our epistemic limits; part of the point of the Dialectic is to support his *conclusion* about this. The alternative is to argue that any attempts to even conceive of the unconditioned will generate contradictions, and that the obvious reactions to these contradictions are unacceptable.

A first obvious reaction would be a theoretical philosophy asserting the existence of unconditioned grounds, for example, as in rationalist substance metaphysics. But Kant argues that the only principle that could justify asserting existence of the unconditioned would equally well support the denial of existence (e.g., A460/B488). So a theoretical philosophy including either the assertion or denial would be unacceptably dogmatic.

A second reaction would be to claim indifference to the topic of the unconditioned. But reason guides all use of our theoretical faculties; thus "so-called indifferentists" cannot really be indifferent, only self-deceived (Ax). Further, establishing indifference would establish that there can be no point in any form of theoretical inquiry at all, or a "skeptical hopelessness" or an unacceptable "*euthanasia* of pure reason" (A407/B433–34).

So Kant argues that there is only one acceptable reaction, which is supposed to be something new: we must conclude that our knowledge is sharply limited by the "bounds of sensibility." The limit is meant to be extremely strict, in particular, in that it prevents us from any final achievement of the

²⁴ Thus, I think that understanding Hegel will require a clean break with thinking of "reason" primarily in terms of justification, inference, and so on, and reason-giving practices, in this sense.

²⁵ See especially A307/B364, and chapter 4 below.

²⁶ Correlation between the word "knowledge" and Kant's epistemic categories can be complex; I defend my position here in chapter 4.

goal we ourselves pursue in all theoretical inquiry: it prevents knowledge of whether or not there is anything unconditioned. Kant takes the carefully balanced position that precisely the denial of knowledge guarantees us room for the demands of reason to play an indispensably necessary guiding or “regulative” role. This guidance is supposed to allow natural scientific progress, but “only asymptotically, as it were, i.e., merely by approximation” (A663/B691).²⁷

This Dialectic argument also privileges the conception of metaphysics delineated above: reason cannot answer the questions “given to it as problems by the nature of reason itself,” but it also cannot “dismiss” them. The result is endless controversy, and “[t]he battlefield of these endless controversies is called metaphysics” (Avii–viii). So “metaphysics” (in this sense, which is supposed to be impossible for us) is most fundamentally concerned with the objects of reason: conditions and the unconditioned, or (in Hegel’s twist on the terminology) reason and absolute or complete reason.

Kant’s Dialectic also suggests that the basic or fundamental philosophical problems, the problems of basic interest to reason, concern the unconditioned or complete explainers. Thus, Kant can establish common ground with metaphysicians. But the aim is then to move metaphysicians toward Kant’s conclusion that we cannot resolve those problems, so that positive progress will be possible only in a transformed sort of theoretical philosophy. Kant’s argument here can be understood in terms of an organizing narrative, which is no longer the two-part narrative of the Copernican revolution, but has rather three parts. The A-Preface provides a vivid political analogy (Aix): (i) Unrestricted political authority tends toward despotism. (ii) A natural response to the resulting wars among despots is to become skeptical about all authority, but this would lead to unacceptable anarchy. (iii) So the basic political problem is to find a third alternative: a just form of political authority defended in a principled manner from descent into either despotism or anarchy. Similarly: (i) Philosophy is always tempted to draw dogmatic conclusions, including (Kant argues) both characteristically rationalist assertions of the existence of unconditioned substances and also denials. (ii) A natural response to resulting controversies between dogmas would be to claim indifference to the unconditioned, but that is impossible and would be an unacceptable form of skeptical hopelessness. (iii) And so the basic problem is to formulate a third alternative concerning reason and the unconditioned, establishing principles to prevent a slide into either dogmatism or indifferentism. In terms of the political analogy,

²⁷ On reason’s role in guiding natural science, see Kitcher (1986, 209), Guyer (1990, 23–27), and Kreines (2009).

what is needed is a “court of justice,” and meeting the need in response to the problem of dogmatism and indifferentism is so important to Kant’s project that “this court is none other than the critique of pure reason itself” (Axi).²⁸ Kant argues that what is required is his account of reason and his principled epistemic limit, from which it will follow (rather than this playing a role as a premise) that a positive philosophical project would require a “revolution” to “transform” (Bxxii) its focus, looking to a different positive project focused on the necessary conditions of the possibility of cognition of objects.

0.5 Hegel’s Concept Thesis, a Metaphysics of the End as First, and Epistemological Monism

Thinking in terms of Kant’s basic question about reason, and the three basic options, gives us one view of the initial opening for Hegel here: he can agree with Kant about the inescapability of problems concerning the completeness or absoluteness of reasons, and about the need for a third principled alternative response to them, beyond dogmatism or indifference; but he can then proceed to argue that the best third alternative takes the form not of Kant’s epistemic limit but rather a new kind of metaphysics of reason, distinct from dogmatism in not succumbing to but rather building from the problems uncovered in the Dialectic.

This puts Hegel in a very different position than is generally realized. Advocates of many otherwise opposing readings of Hegel tend to share a basic commitment: *if* Hegel were to really contest Kant in a non-question-begging manner, then this would have to involve focusing on a basic epistemological problem and claiming to better resolve it than Kant. In particular, some agree and think that Hegel fails to even engage with Kant on this epistemological level, thus taking this to mean that he essentially begs the question against Kant; they often tend to prefer a Spinozist or metaphysical monism interpretation of Hegel.²⁹ Other interpreters think that Hegel does engage on basically epistemological ground. Some of them see the epistemological challenge in inflationary terms, as requiring a foundation or infallibility or something similar; they tend to argue that Hegel is giving an epistemological argument for a metaphysical monism—for example, for a view according to which there is no gap between knower and known because everything is in the One.³⁰ Others

²⁸ On the importance of the Dialectic to the project of the *Critique*, see also (C 12:258–59).

²⁹ E.g., Guyer (1993, 171–72); Düsing (1976, 119; 1983, 421); Siep (2000, 18–21).

³⁰ See, e.g., Beiser (1993, 15). Forster’s (1989, 123ff.) Hegel addresses ancient skeptical problems with, in part, a version of Spinoza’s God. And see Franks (2005, 9–10) on German idealists,

see Hegel's project as at base a more deflationary approach to epistemology. Some hold that such epistemological considerations lead Hegel to a fallibilism and coherentism, which he supports with a form of ontological holism.³¹ Others argue that we must, on pain of reading Hegel as begging the question against Kant, read him rather as adopting an epistemology-based rejection of previous metaphysics, and aiming to push yet further a positive project like the one Kant pursues in the Transcendental Analytic and especially the Transcendental Deduction, focused on consideration of the conditions of the possibility of experience, cognition, or similar.³²

I reject the common commitment.³³ You might try to build some metaphysics on epistemology by one of the above routes; but you will neither reach *Hegel's* metaphysics nor overcome the dogmatism worrying him until you recognize the fundamentality of metaphysical issues from Kant's Dialectic. If Kant or any Kantians think that metaphysics can be dispensed with on epistemological grounds alone, then Hegel dismisses this with the swimming rejoinder. But this is not to say that Hegel fails to engage *Kant* on his own terms. Rather, Kant's critique of metaphysics stands or falls with the Transcendental Dialectic. And Hegel can argue on the basis of considerations drawn from *this* argument without building on epistemology, or begging the question³⁴—for he can argue that this critique of metaphysics from within goes awry before it supports the epistemology of Kant's limits.

Of course, any attempt to navigate in this direction would still have to face the threatened internal conflicts, uncovered in Kant's Dialectic. This

including Hegel. (There is also a metaphysical version of Franks's trilemma, but here Spinozism seems necessary to resolve the epistemological version.) Horstmann (2006, 23) is an interesting case, saying Hegel is more interested in the metaphysics of monism and epistemological is only a means to that end; I think that, from the perspective of Hegel's *Logic*, this would not be a good means, as it needlessly cedes authority to epistemology.

³¹ See especially Westphal (1989b). He sees Hegel as objecting to a priority of epistemology (1989, 2), but he has something different in mind, as compared to my view here, insofar as the project he describes is focused on establishing an "epistemological realism" and defeating skepticism; Hegel's ontological holism is supposed to support this epistemology (1989, chapter 10).

³² See especially Pippin (1989). I read this as deflationary in the sense that the strategy against skepticism, including Kant's denial of knowledge of things in themselves, is to "undercut the pre-suppositions" of realism, "rather than answer ... directly" (98).

³³ Ameriks (1992) defends Kant against all of these epistemologized Hegels, arguing that: the inflationary versions lack a "persuasive epistemology" (192–93); a deflationism like Westphal's misses "what is distinctive-and-controversial" about Hegel (191), and Pippin's Hegel mischaracterizes Kant's idealism (Ameriks 1991). I do not contest these points either way, because I am arguing that none of this is any problem for Hegel *himself*, as opposed to these epistemology-oriented interpretations.

³⁴ Contra the arguments that Hegel's response to the Dialectic begs the question in Gueroult (1978, 272) and Rosen (1982, 34).

is nothing unique, however; Hegel must face the problem because Kant has such a strong argument that all philosophers must, even if they do not realize it. In fact, I will argue that recent history is *still* testament to the inescapability of the same problems. Think of this in terms of the above three-part statement of the basic Dialectic problem, now in a different order: (ii) In the middle decades of the twentieth century, philosophy came to be dominated by logical empiricists and positivists who claimed indifference toward metaphysics. (i) The history of philosophy since then has been largely the story of the return of more traditional metaphysical views and debates.³⁵ But this road leads to the return of appeals to notions similar to reason in the world, like “metaphysical grounding,” and then (I argue) to *complete* forms of them, or to “fundamentality” and “metaphysical foundationalism.”³⁶ And Kant and Hegel have excellent (but ultimately slightly different) reasons for worrying that this is unacceptably dogmatic. We can see here the threat that philosophy might indeed oscillate back and forth between unacceptable forms of indifferentism and dogmatism, and so also the need for (iii) a principled third alternative. Kant has such a principled position, and it should be recognized that this gives his position great philosophical appeal. The question for Hegel is whether he can show that there is a better way of formulating a third alternative, and one that is equally principled but more metaphysically constructive.

The most general claim from which Hegel will build his response is what I call his:

Concept thesis: the reasons that explain why things are as they are and do what they do are always found in immanent “concepts” (*Begriffe*), akin to immanent universals or kinds (*Gattungen*).³⁷

This can sound obscure, but once we see Hegel’s case for the inescapability of these metaphysical questions, and the drawbacks of the alternative answers, we will begin to see the lasting philosophical appeal of the concept thesis. Hegel is interested in reason in the world; but this is not to say that the world

³⁵ See, e.g., Zimmerman (2004, xxi).

³⁶ See especially Schaffer’s (2010) defense of metaphysical monism on grounds of foundationalism.

³⁷ In this respect, my approach is sometimes classed as a “revised metaphysical” (Redding 1997, 2.4) or a “conceptual realist” reading (Pinkard 2013, 506). I am indebted here to others grouped here, in particular Westphal (1989b, chapter 10) and Stern (1990). And to deVries (1988) on Hegel on natural kinds. See also Houlgate (2006, 140). The idea of a metaphysics of reason and the stress on Kant’s Dialectic will send me in a very different direction after this point.

is conscious, or reasoning. Laws of nature are a form of reason, but not a conscious one; for example:

The movement of the solar system is governed by unalterable laws; these laws are its reason. But neither the sun nor the planets which revolve around it are conscious of them.³⁸

Similarly, Hegel is arguing that the world has the structure of thought and, in particular, explanatory thinking. That “reason is in the world,” Hegel says, “conveys exactly what is contained in the expression ‘objective thought.’”³⁹ And, similarly, reality is structured by concepts (*Begriffe*) of explanatory import—in the sense of explanatory kinds or universals. The *logic* of these thoughts is a consideration of forms of reason in the world.

Fully understanding the point of the unusual terminology will require noting that Hegel aims to distinguish different logics of reason in the world: First, take something that interacts with other things in lawful ways: Why does it do what it does? On account of immanent “concepts” in the sense of the natures of such things, and more specifically the powers that such things have in virtue of the nature of their kind. Second, take a living being: Why does it do what it does? On account of the “concept” in the sense of the biological species or kind, and more specifically the distinctive ways in which its species seeks the immanent end of self-preservation. Third, take the sorts of beings who can grasp concepts and so engage in reasoning about such questions: Why do we do what we do? On account of our immanent “concept,” the concept of “spirit,” whose content turns out to be freedom. As anticipated above, the first case, of the lawful, will be the least complete form of reason in the world. And the last case is Hegel’s central example of the complete form of the concept—of “the concept,” rather than just a concept. This last point is a part of Hegel’s reason for his unusual terminology that will only emerge in the full course of this study: He calls explanatory grounds “reasons” in part because the central example of the absolute form of them is not a brute, necessitating law of nature, but rather the kind of being that engages in *reasoning*. Similarly, he calls his universals or kinds “concepts” in part because the central example of the metaphysically absolute form of them is the concept of *concept-users*, or a case in which a concept is “for itself.”

Hegel’s concept thesis will raise specific forms of subsidiary epistemic questions, such as: How can we know these concepts or universals? We can distinguish two responses here. First, there is the account of how it is possible to know

³⁸ VPG 12:23/34. See chapter 2 for more on this passage and this view of laws.

³⁹ EL §24R; trans. mod.

this or that concept, in the sense that physics studies the concept of matter, or the nature of the kind; here the answer is that we draw inferences, in thinking over our observations, to what explains them. Second, there is the issue of how philosophy specifically knows about *the* concept; the answer here can only come at the end, by putting all the puzzle pieces together into a final account for the method of the *Logic*. But in neither case must Hegel develop a comprehensive epistemology, nor a comprehensive answer to general skeptical worries. What he needs to show is that his account of reason in the world is in no worse epistemological shape than its otherwise strongest competitors, while being in better metaphysical shape.

How can Hegel rest his development of this concept thesis on considerations drawn from Kant's Dialectic? The crucial move will be to distinguish real forms of reason from a kind of imposter. In effect, Hegel argues for a fault line between two different sorts of arguments in metaphysics: One kind argues for adding elements to our metaphysics because they are needed to explain something, or needed as grounds in the sense of *reasons* or *explainers*. Another kind can seem similar, but in reality imagines that something is *dependent* or requires *support* from a substratum; but all that really powers such arguments, Hegel shows, is an assumption that reality must correspond to the form of judgment, or "the understanding" as a faculty of such judgment. So the second kind of argument posits grounds in the sense of *substrata* supposed to correspond with the subject of subject-predicate judgment. Hegel argues that the real upshot of Kant's Dialectic is that pre-Kantian metaphysics fails by confusedly demanding one and the same thing as both a *reason* and a *substratum*. It fails by taking "the *perspective of the understanding alone* on the objects of reason" (EL §27). And Hegel argues that the right response is to formulate for the first time a metaphysics of reason alone, and to completely distinguish *X* being the *reason* for *Y*, from *Y* merely *depending* on *X* as a substratum, where *X* might have no explanatory import at all.

That the distinction has implications throughout metaphysics can be seen through its connection to the topic of *substance*, which then can no longer be understood in terms of dependence or substrata, but only in terms of reason in the world. But as far as the confrontation with Kant goes, what is most important is the way this route leads Hegel to reject metaphysical foundationalism. We can get a glimpse of the idea by comparing Jean-Luc Godard's famous rejection of traditional narrative: a film needs a beginning, middle, and an end, but "not necessarily in that order." Foundationalism holds that there is a beginning, in the sense of something primitive or dependent on nothing else, which is also first in importance within metaphysics, so that it can be and is a sufficient reason for everything.⁴⁰ Hegel will argue that foundationalism threatens

⁴⁰ Hegel taking the end as absolute is often noted, but interpreted differently. For example, Yovel (1992, 32) sees this as a correction within Spinoza's monism; I argue it is a rejection of any form of Spinoza's monism, corrected or not.

to force us to eliminativism. For example, Spinoza's foundationalism (Hegel argues) threatens to eliminate all determinate reality, leaving only one indeterminate substance. Scientistic foundationalism threatens to eliminate all teleology, including our own purposive action, leaving only pure mechanism.

Hegel will argue for a very different view: what is first (in metaphysical priority) is the end (or dependent on a beginning). As Hegel says, here in a criticism of Spinoza, "the absolute cannot be a first, an immediate. Essentially the absolute is rather its result."⁴¹ In the end, on Hegel's view, there are primitive, lowest-level concepts or kinds, or the lawful kinds. But the beginning, in this sense of the primitive, does not come first in the sense of being highest or prior in metaphysical import; the primitive or "immediate" is least explanatorily complete, of least interest to reason, and (given the point above about substance) insubstantial. A traditional and persistent response to this result would be to posit some further otherwise unknown substrata, hiding behind physical reality and supporting it: categorical grounds for dispositions, a hidden conscious or proto-conscious side of physical reality in panpsychism, or the like. But Hegel holds that this insubstantiality alone is the lawful, even if it amounts a kind of real contradiction: everything lawful is so dependent as to be constituted by relation to others; but nothing here is independent enough to support the constitution of anything else. The point is that the lawful is insubstantial, not that it has a hidden substance in either substrata or one all-encompassing substratum. To find something more satisfying to reason, Hegel does not drill down but finds what is metaphysically prior only in what comes later: teleological forms of the concept. And those that are least primitive or most "mediated" are the concepts or kinds that will take highest priority in the order of the metaphysics; they have explanatory import absolutely their own, and so are substantial, and forms of what Hegel calls the "absolute idea." So the primitive is real but only incompletely explicable. It is not the case, then, that everything is completely explicable. Only the most mediated is completely explicable. This is the metaphysical priority of the absolute idea, with the central example being spirit; it is a metaphysical kind of idealism.⁴²

This unusual metaphysics will raise further distinctive epistemological problems, related to the skeptical hopelessness about reason invoked by Kant. While it is not clear how much of the metaphysics could be defended in a different way, Hegel, in fact, responds with an extremely ambitious epistemological account of the method of the *Logic* itself. This will add to his metaphysical idealism, above, a kind of epistemological idealism: All understanding or

⁴¹ WL 6:196/473. Also: "The insight that absolute truth must be a result, and conversely, that a result presupposes a first truth" (WL 5: 69/48). Cf. "Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*" (PhG §20), and "the last is the first" (VPR 17:234/3:84).

⁴² Care is required, because the term "idealism" can be used in different ways; see chapter 10.

explanatory knowledge will depend at least implicitly on understanding of the absolute idea. And although Hegel's metaphysics is not monist, the "all" in this last formulation will make his epistemology strikingly monist: All explanatory knowledge of anything will depend on its place in a system, where everything in the system takes its place relative to explanatory knowledge of the absolute idea. Indeed, although the metaphysics does without a necessary being, akin in that respect to Spinoza's substance, the epistemology ends up with an analogue of this: the existence of the absolute idea and the possibility of this systematic knowledge of everything in relation to it—this turns out to be epistemically necessary, in the sense that there can never be reasons or arguments against this, and all reasons or arguments contain the seeds of arguments for existence. And the method of the *Logic* is supposed to proceed with an epistemic necessity establishing the structure of this system: At the beginning, since we will pursue theoretical inquiry, we must take this not to be pointless, and so take there to be something absolute, or a complete form of reason. At each step we consider proposals concerning the absolute, uncovering contradictions, as for example a contradiction in the lawful. Each contradiction means a failure as a definition of the absolute, but teaches something determinate about a better proposal. And the conclusion completes a circle, or justifies the beginning. It establishes not just comprehension of how something could be absolute or a complete form of reason but also that there is such a thing—in the form of whatever it is that thinks through this whole line of argument, or "spirit" in a logical sense. On this account, everything will have contradiction within it, although only the absolute idea will both contain and resolve contradiction. But understanding how Hegel's actual arguments hope to support his conclusions will require keeping careful track of the distinction between metaphysical and epistemological issues, and how the former drive the latter.

0.6 Plan, Texts, Interpretations, and Charity

Insofar as the key idea below will be that metaphysics is concerned with reason and ultimately complete reason, I proceed as follows: I begin by trying to bring out the considerable force of Hegel's arguments about *reasons* (Part I), both primitive lawful reasons and mediated teleological reasons. Here I discuss some issues which tend to seem to us discreet and amenable to piecemeal treatment, seeking to work my way toward Hegel's unfamiliar systematic approach to everything via the notion of reason in the world. I then proceed to defend as well Kant's Dialectic worries about such forms of metaphysics, turning on the argument that such an interest in reasons must ultimately always be an interest in *complete* reason (Part II). And then I proceed

to Hegel's systematic response, in defense of the reality and knowability of reconceived *complete reasons* (Part III).

Because I seek to interpret Hegel on the basis of careful engagement with his arguments, there can be no question of covering all of Hegel's writings. So I need an organizing focus with respect to texts. My minor focus here will be the introductory material in the *Science of Logic* (1812–18) and the *Encyclopedia* (1817–30). But my major focus will be the material at conclusion of the *Logic*, by which I mean both the self-standing *Science of Logic* (WL) and the version that appears as the first part of the *Encyclopedia* (EL). Drawing titles from the EL allows the sections that make up this major focus to be singled out:

THIRD SUBDIVISION OF LOGIC: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CONCEPT

...

- B. The Object
 - (a) Mechanism
 - (b) Chemism
 - (c) Teleology
- C. The Idea
 - (a) Life
 - (b) Cognition
 - (c) The absolute Idea

I argue that Hegel here is bringing to a resolution his response to his organizing problems concerning reasons, which unify his project in the *Logic*. Where necessary, I will try to reach back and connect these concluding arguments to important earlier material in the *Logic*—and other writings—so that they can be read in the proper broader context. But there can be no question of giving equal treatment to everything.

There is no space here for an adequate defense of an interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), because this would raise so many additional thorny and controversial issues about its internal unity and relation to later writings. So I will refer to passages in the *Phenomenology* only where I think a case can be made that these clarify a point in later work. Although I cannot defend this here, I do not think that Hegel's organizing focus entirely reversed itself after 1807. So my view is that the *Phenomenology* is also unified, to the degree that it is, by a commitment to the fundamentality of the metaphysics of reason. The *Phenomenology* begins, to be sure, with discussions that certainly include broadly epistemological issues. I would argue that Hegel is considering these in order to argue against their fundamentality, digging down to the underlying metaphysical issues he will then take as prior. But here I impose

on myself the constraint of arguing without appeal to my interpretation of the *Phenomenology*. Even if it could be shown that the *Phenomenology* is radically different in this respect than I take the *Logic* to be, I do not think that this would undercut my case with respect to the *Logic*.

I will also not discuss Hegel's development. If there had been space for that, I would begin with the role Hegel gives to the Antinomies from Kant's Dialectic in the development of the *Logic* project.⁴³ Nor will I rest any weight at all on writings earlier than the *Phenomenology*, as this would raise too many complicated questions about Hegel's rapid early development. So where I refer to "Hegel" and "Hegel's project," for the sake of concision, I am referring strictly to the post-*Phenomenology* Hegel, to the project in theoretical philosophy, and especially the *Logic*. Similarly, where I refer to "Kant's" views, for the sake of concision, I am referring to the period from the first *Critique* to the third. Further, I minimize references to transcriptions from Hegel's lectures and give them far less interpretive weight; I cite them if they further clarify a point in others texts or offer the only way to see Hegel's position on a related side issue.

And I will not focus much attention on other post-Kantian philosophers here. My worry is that most of these figures are just as difficult to interpret as Hegel. And I would argue that we are often misled by similarities in *claims* to overlook great differences in *organizing focus* between different post-Kantian philosophical projects. Space permitting, I would have included much about Jacobi; but space did not permit.

I do take it to be desirable to explain Hegel, and his response to Kant, in terms that connect this with prior, early modern philosophy. So I have tried to do so here—introducing, where helpful, considerations from Descartes, Spinoza, Newton, Leibniz, Hume, and others.

One complexity about writing is that Hegel himself will argue that the very form of judgment tends to lead philosophy astray. And yet Hegel himself must write in this form, and I must as well. So I will have to use the subject of a sentence to refer to some things that, Hegel argues, cannot really correspond to such a subject and are not really "things" or "objects" (in an associated sense of these terms). But I will try to be very clear, in chapter 6, about Hegel's argument concerning the form of judgment, and what follows from it.

Finally, there is much debate about interpretive charity in recent discussions of Hegel. But I think that we should distinguish two forms of charity. One form of charity would recommend trying to interpret the sentences of an historical figure in such a manner that as many as possible turn out to be true (by our lights). I avoid this because, first, it threatens to erase differences,

⁴³ E.g., PP 4:184/90ff.; Pinkard (2000, 340).

beginning with differences between contemporary and historical views. But it would also erase differences between different historical figures (who would all be interpreted in light of the same current orthodoxies). When metaphysics is popular, we would tend to read everyone as pursuing metaphysics; when metaphysics unpopular, we would tend to read everyone as pursuing some program in line with this. Further, I think that this method is not really charitable: it will tend to introduce a disorganized heap of contemporary orthodoxies, muddying arguments and the overall organization that makes for an ambitious or compelling philosophical project.

I advocate a different kind of charity. When interpreting historical philosophers, I think we should at least look for the strongest arguments present, look for a way to understand the arguments in light of a coherent organizing focus of a project, and understand conclusions in terms of those arguments and that organizing focus. Thus we might also hope for what seem to me the most interesting results that attention to the history of philosophy can provide: discovery of powerful arguments in support of conclusions that are unfamiliar, or contrary to the orthodoxies of today.

For this reason I thus try to avoid reading each of Hegel's discussions as predicated on a metaphysics not defended there. For example, where Hegel discusses atomism, there is a tendency to take him to be rejecting atomism on grounds that he holds an anti-atomist metaphysics. But if we read *every* discussion in this way, then Hegel is left with a mere assumption of a metaphysics that begs every question in every discussion; I call this a "question-begging reading." I think that philosophical interpreters should seek discussions where non-question-begging arguments can be found, from which we might then understand how Hegel might build support for his overall metaphysics. I return to Hegel's own expression of the philosophical requirement to argue for every claim, and so why this approach is required specifically in reading Hegel, in §10.1.

My form of charity then also tells against introducing tensions by looking at Hegel through the lens of a more recently popular kind of project. For example, we might ask about a comparison between Hegel and some project from twentieth-century linguistic-turn philosophy. And the comparison might be of great interest and importance, uncovering many similar *claims*. But if we think of Hegel's *project* in these terms, then we will tend to come to the conclusion that Hegel is at odds with himself: in parts he succeeds in linguistic-turn philosophizing, but in parts 'backslides' contrary to 'his' 'best' intentions; there is a fault line in the texts between a 'good' and a 'bad' Hegel. But here our conceptions of forwards/backwards and good/bad, and the fault-line itself, are introduced with our choice of interpretive lens. So if our question is about Hegel, rather than a particular comparison, then we should rather take our

orientation from an attempt to understand his own organizing focus and its philosophical appeal, rather than trying to find philosophical appeal by viewing matters through the lens of a more recently popular project or terminology.

And, in general, I think we should find a coherent project, if it is possible to find one. For example, we should try to avoid reading Hegel as if he begins by promising a constructive account of some subject— whether metaphysics, the conditions of the possibility of cognition of objects, or whatever—and then criticizes others for failing to provide this, but then later switches to a project that declines (on pragmatist, quietist, or other grounds) to construct such an account.

In any case, I am interested in Hegel, and also Kant, insofar as I think they both have strong philosophical arguments for positions in many ways unpopular today, and also deeply at odds with one another. Thus, I aim to get beyond having to choose between interpretations that are either *Manichean* (either Hegel or Kant is justified and the other just gets the philosophy entirely wrong) or *assimilationist* (finding philosophical interest on both sides by claiming that both pursue a basically similar project, if perhaps to varying degrees of success or completion). Rather, I seek to understand how there can be powerful arguments on both sides of a fruitful philosophical disagreement extending all the way to questions about the orientation of philosophy itself. I do not attempt here any exhaustive or decisive calculation of costs and benefits of Hegel's positions as compared to Kant's. Nor do I attempt such a final reckoning with respect to all contemporary alternatives. I see attempts to somehow declare a final victor as less enticing than the goal of setting contemporary ways of thinking aside as much as possible, and coming to understand how rival, powerful arguments in Hegel and Kant can help us to gain a better perspective on philosophy, or a better understanding of the underlying philosophical terrain on which debates are still waged today; thus we might hope to learn that some of the most promising paths across this terrain are not the ones we would have expected—they are older, neglected, and deserving of renewed philosophical attention.

PART ONE

PRIMITIVE AND
MEDIATE REASONS

Immanent Concepts from Mechanism to Teleology

I begin with Hegel's pursuit of the metaphysics of reason, and his most general position on this topic, or the concept thesis: the reasons for why things are as they are and do what they do are always found in immanent "concepts" (*Begriffe*). Hegel will apply this thesis to a variety of topics, from mechanism (chapter 1), to the laws of nature (chapter 2), to natural teleology (chapter 3). Looking back from a contemporary perspective, however, it can initially be difficult to even engage with his proposal, because it can be difficult to appreciate why we should need a systematic approach to such topics. Why not, we might wonder, just use whatever philosophical approach fits best in each case, and come up with answers that—hopefully—will sound less obscure than "immanent concepts" everywhere? But the point of beginning with these topics is to see how Hegel finds in each case the same issues arising again and again; no matter what approach to solutions we might prefer, we find ourselves at least implicitly leaning on claims about reason in the world. This is true even if we look to the idea that the amazing success of the modern sciences at discovering mechanisms should—we might have thought—rendered obsolete issues concerning any form of reason in the world, and proposals like Hegel's concerning anything like immanent concepts. For the very appeal to mechanism, in seeking escape, must appeal to a theory of how reason functions in the world, and the basic concepts or kinds in

terms of which things do what they do. The same is true if we look for an escape in an empiricist metaphysics, on which there are only loose and separate particulars, and so no reasons in any one thing why anything else must follow. That view remains especially popular to this day. But we will see that more is required to deal with questions about explanation. In particular, we cannot hold that explaining something requires *only* providing an account satisfying to some particular audience; there will need to be more constraint on what is genuinely explanatory. To this end we can easily add empiricist account of the laws of nature and explanation. This too remains today. But this will turn out to be a view that requires an account of at least a minimal form of reason in the world—although not a form that turns out well suited to the tasks of making sense of the laws of nature or the notion of explanation. It turns out better, then, to face these issues about reason directly, and to posit immanent concepts to deal with them.

When it comes to natural teleology, it seems again initially obvious that we can escape claiming knowledge of a distinct form of reason in the world, and any associated immanent concepts. After all, Kant has a powerful argument for the skeptical conclusion that we cannot even know whether there is any such thing as natural teleology, so it certainly seems possible to avoid positing in this case another form of reason in the world, or more immanent concepts. But Kant's skeptical argument turns on a recognition of a connection between teleology and reason in the world. This is a connection that, we will see, is still called upon by opposing sides in debates about teleology and biology today. And the connection opens a path for Hegel to argue that we can know that there is natural teleology—and so also a distinct form of reason in the world, and a teleological form of immanent concept. This will not be a primitive case of reasons in the world, but a mediated case.

At each step, here, I consider how Hegel defends his systematic approach to such issues by showing how even seeming rivals to the concept thesis in fact support it. So I do not begin this first part with a topic Hegel takes to be first in metaphysical importance. I rather begin with something that most seems a rival to his approach, and build from there. As I proceed to look at how Hegel co-opts such seeming alternatives, we can hope to build toward at least an initial sense of why even taking all these issues piecemeal will still always lead us back in the same

direction, so that it would be an advantage to instead approach matters with a systematic account of reason in the world.

But all of this is also preparation. Once we have seen how the metaphysics of reason is everywhere, at least in the form of implicit assumptions, we will be ready to see why Kant's Transcendental Dialectic critique of the metaphysics of reason has a far greater breadth and force than is generally recognized (Part II). And then we can turn to how Hegel hopes to show that a systematic approach, built around the concept thesis and the primitive and mediate reasons discussed here, can answer that deeper challenge (Part III).

The Dialectic of Mechanism

A well-known scientist . . . described how the earth orbits around the sun. At the end of the lecture, a little old lady at the back of the room got up and said: “What you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise.” The scientist gave a superior smile before replying, “What is the tortoise standing on?” “You’re very clever, young man, very clever,” said the old lady. “But it’s turtles all the way down!”

—Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*

Mechanism can seem to be the greatest threat to Hegel’s concept thesis; but Hegel shows that mechanism is really testament to the need to take immanent concepts as a primitive case of explanatory import. We can understand in these terms the respect in which Hegel’s account of mechanism is dialectical, seeking to justify an *Aufhebung* (sublation) of mechanism, or to both cancel and preserve it.¹ It is important to explain this ambition without resting content with the terminology alone, and I defend the following account: Hegel’s position is that there are immanent concepts, universals, or natures in virtue of which things do what they do, or, alternatively, concepts or natures characterized by forces, powers, dispositions, or a directedness toward characteristic effects. But some might take scientific success at discovering mechanisms to support the view I call “pure” or “conceptless mechanism,” according to which anything like immanent concepts would be superfluous. So Hegel cancels mechanism in that he rejects this pure or conceptless mechanism. This saves room for Hegel to preserve mechanism in another sense: he argues that some things (not all) are explicable in mechanistic terms, but precisely in virtue of their immanent concepts, and most prominently the immanent concept of

¹ I am building in this chapter from some of the results of Kreines (2004).

matter; I call this “reasonable mechanism.” So Hegel aims to dismiss pure or conceptless mechanism, but to preserve reasonable mechanism.

We can also express this ambition in terms of the relation to teleology: Hegel’s claim is that even mechanism involves immanent concepts in virtue of which things are *directed* at characteristic effects. In this respect, mechanistic phenomena offer less of a contrast to teleology than expected. Mechanism, we might say, is *almost* teleological. But it is not fully teleological, in the sense treated in chapter 3: mechanism does not involve parts that are really *for the sake of* anything or any end or *telos*, for which there is a possibility of normative failure to fulfill an end or *telos*.²

In Hegel’s positive account of reasonable mechanism, his central example will be the rotation of the solar system. This is a mechanistic phenomenon in the reasonable sense: it can be explained in terms of all the matter composing that system, insofar as this means that the reason it rotates is the immanent concept of matter, and the power or force inherent in that concept. As Hegel says, “gravitation is the true and determinate concept of material corporeality” (EN §269). This is a “concept” in the following sense, discussed at the beginning of the *Logic*:

[T]he *nature*, the specific *essence*, that which is truly *permanent* and *substantial* in the manifold and accidentality of appearance and fleeting externalization, is the *concept* of the thing, *the universal which is present in it*. (WL 5:26/16)

This is not a “concept” in any sense in which one might say that it is only a representation in a mind, or “only a concept” (WL 6:257/518) of ours, something we form, or something we abstract from experience. One reason for calling this nature or universal a “concept” is that it is supposed to *not* be something graspable in sensible or imagistic terms, but something such as can be conceptually comprehended. (But, as noted above, some of the reasons for this terminology will only emerge later, in Part III; some of the point of using terms that fall so far from how we think of the mechanical is to anticipate that the lawful will be the most complete form neither of “the concept” nor of reason in the world, but will contain a contradiction forcing us to understand completeness of reasons rather in teleological terms.)

Finally, it is important to note that the negative case against pure or conceptless mechanism will not turn out to be sufficient, just of itself, to support Hegel’s positive account in terms of immanent concepts. Rather, the negative case will allow us to single out an assumption crucial in the positive case, and

² Cf. Hoffman’s (2009) case that all causality involves directedness, and that this is teleological.

in need of further support: the assumption that there is such a thing as objective explanatory relevance. This will be the topic of the next chapter below.

1.1 Pure Mechanism and the Initial Regress Rejoinder

In order to understand why appeal to mechanism can seem to threaten Hegel's claims about immanent concepts, consider first Descartes. He holds, in Hegel's terms, that there cannot be anything like immanent concepts for extended things; "the concept" is supposed to be the "opposite" of "what is extended, spatial, separated" (VGP 20:148/3:244). Note, in particular, Descartes' criticisms of the "substantial forms" of scholastic philosophy:

Others may . . . imagine in this wood the form of fire, the quality of heat, and the action that burns as completely different things. . . . I am satisfied in conceiving of the motion of its parts. . . . I find that this alone will be able to bring about all the changes in the wood.³

Mechanistic explanation supposedly requires no appeal to anything like a form or quality and its action, but rather purely the movement of the parts "alone." And although Descartes does not always go further, it is easy to see the appeal of concluding, from the explanatory superfluity of anything like a form or concept and its powers or actions, that there is no reason to admit such things into our ontology at all.

A more recent comparison would be to Quine's "Natural Kinds" (1969). Quine argues that notions of kind, similarity, and the dispositions of kinds are initially useful but not "respectable." To render them respectable, we would need to find underlying structure and mechanisms that explain why members of a kind do what they do. And once we do that, we render appeal to kinds and their dispositions respectable but now "superfluous" (54–55). So it is easy to understand why appeal to mechanism might show ideas of powerful kinds or natures to be explanatorily superfluous.

Hegel, of course, formulates the seeming threat from mechanism in his own terms. We can best understand these terms by beginning with Kant's general idea that a mechanistic whole is the "product of the parts and of their forces and their capacity to combine by themselves" (KU 5:408).⁴ We get pure

³ Descartes (2000, 42); cf. Garber (2001, 230).

⁴ I am indebted to discussions of Kant on mechanism in McLaughlin (1990, 152f.); Allison (1991); and Ginsborg (2001).

mechanism if we specify that “by themselves” will mean the superfluity of any explanatory appeal to the kind of whole involved and any supposed powers, and then if we add the idea that *everything* in nature is mechanistic in this sense. The result is pure or conceptless mechanism: all appeal to anything like an immanent concept of this kind would be superfluous. Hegel seeks in the “Mechanism” chapter of the *Logic* to test the coherence of this pure mechanism. The general procedure in the *Logic* is to test whether different “logical determinations” might succeed as “definitions of the absolute” (EL §85). To take the general idea of mechanistic explanation to be absolute would be to hold that throughout nature everything is always purely the product of underlying uncoordinated parts. But Hegel will argue against the coherence of the idea of mechanism as absolute (EL §195Z). He will do so by considering pure mechanism as a hypothesis or thought experiment, and investigating what follows from it.

What follows? To begin with, given the pure mechanism hypothesis, it follows that everything would be explicable as a composite of independent, non-coordinated parts. Furthermore, for any two objects, any larger system containing them would be merely an aggregate, so our objects must be operating independently: neither is of essential explanatory relevance to why the other does what it does. Hegel’s term “indifference” (*gleichgültigkeit*) for this lack of explanatory relevance will be important throughout his philosophy. So, for example, connections between things would be “indifferent to what they connect” (WL 6:412/633). Hegel also uses “external” and similar terms to make this point: any nature of any whole or connection is external, or explanatorily irrelevant, to what things do. This is not to deny that anything has any determinate features at all. Some salt tastes salty, for example. It is just that this feature would be irrelevant to what the salt does, because what it does would always be determined independently of the features of any such whole—by the underlying components of the salt, for example. Hegel puts the point by saying, of the “mechanical object,” that

[t]he determinacies, therefore, which are in it do indeed pertain to it; but the *form* that constitutes their difference and combines them into a unity is an external one, indifferent to them. (WL 6:412/633)

Finally, pure mechanism can allow “concepts” only in the ordinary sense of something subjective by which we think about things, rather than any reason why things do what they do; pure mechanism simply holds that “the object” has the “concept” “as something subjective *outside it*” (EL §195). It is easy to see, then, why pure mechanism should seem to threaten Hegel’s idea of immanent concepts, in virtue of which things do what they do.

Hegel will respond to the threat by arguing that pure mechanism undercuts itself, and then he will proceed to cut off different ways for pure mechanism to try to escape this conclusion. We can approach the basic argument about undercutting by beginning with contemporary terms: It is true that we can now explain the dissolution of salt in water in terms of electrons and protons and the underlying structure. So we do not for this purpose need to recognize salt and water as natural kinds, with inherent natures characterized by powers or dispositions. But note that the burden in such explanation is now being undertaken entirely by the underlying parts; we are still carving out a kind or concept (kinds or concepts of particles, or charges) in terms of what that kind of thing *does* (attracting opposites and repelling likes). So insofar as there is explanatory import, even of mechanism, there is no superfluity of immanent concepts (or the like) suggested here, or no support for *pure* mechanism.

But the case is stronger when run in the opposite direction, as Hegel runs it: if pure mechanism were really true, then there would be no explanatory import of anything at all, including mechanism; so then it could not be true that mechanism itself has the kind of explanatory import that could reveal anything else to be superfluous. More specifically, it will follow from pure mechanism that explaining requires recharacterizing wholes in terms of their parts or their interactions with other objects within a larger whole system. But how specifically shall we break our object into parts? Or to which other objects shall we relate it in what larger whole? The problem here is that it will not matter. Wherever we look, the pure mechanism hypothesis will tell us again that what we find *there* is also explanatorily superfluous. No matter what parts we distinguish, each of these would have to be itself merely an aggregate—not explicable in terms of that particular whole, but rather in terms of further parts. So with pure mechanism an object

points for its determinateness *outside and beyond* itself, constantly to objects for which it is however likewise *a matter of indifference that they do the determining*.

This is like trying to formulate a kind of “determinism” that ends up without any determining, or that

assigns for each determination of the object that of another object; but this other object is likewise indifferent both to its determinateness and its determining. (WL 6:412/633)

We might imagine proceeding to the limit here and characterizing everything there is in every possible level of detail. But the problem is that none of these

innumerably many ways of characterizing things can be of any more explanatory relevance than any other. If no way of redescribing can be privileged over or better than any other, and all are equally arbitrary or a matter of subjective preference, then there can be no distinction between those that explain and those that merely describe without explaining. But this undercuts the initial pure mechanist proposal, which was that an appeal to concepts or forms is superfluous *because the real explanation is*, rather, mechanistic. So when a proponent of pure mechanism gets to his crucial claim about explanation he pronounces what is by his own lights an “empty word”: “to *explain* the determination of an object, and to this end to extend the representation of it beyond it, is only an *empty word*” (WL 6:412/633).

Now this kind of argument can seem vulnerable to the rejoinder that it merely assumes a notion of explanation setting a standard relative to which mechanism is supposed to come up short, leaving the pure mechanist free to reject that standard. For example, Hegel is often taken to argue like this: (i) everything must be *completely* explicable; (ii) given pure mechanism, an infinite regress would prevent any explanation from coming to an end or being complete; (iii) therefore pure mechanism cannot be correct.⁵ That would not be much of an argument. For any pure mechanist will be arguing that scientific success in finding mechanistic explanation supports the rejection of the first premise merely assumed here. One might hold that Hegel somehow supports that first premise elsewhere. But if we *always* read Hegel’s arguments in this way, then he will seem to always be drawing consequences from a mere assumption—this is the question-begging reading (§0.6). So it is important to see whether we can find some more complete arguments somewhere in Hegel. And I am arguing that we can find just this in the case of “Mechanism.” For Hegel’s argument here is very different. Hegel’s argument is stronger because pure mechanism *itself* sets the standard for what counts as explanatory, specifically by holding that the initial appeal to immanent concepts and the like is of *no* explanatory relevance because the real explanatory work is done by underlying mechanisms. So the principle is that anything resting on an underlying mechanism is of *no* explanatory relevance. But pure mechanism also implies that *all* mechanistic explanations fall into this same category: they all rest on underlying mechanisms. So pure mechanism itself must conclude that all mechanistic explanations are of *no* explanatory relevance at all. Thus, it cannot sustain the initial claim that the real explanatory work is done by any mechanism. If pure mechanism were to defend itself by replying that mechanistic explanations are of some explanatory relevance, even if they are not ideally

⁵ See similar interpretations in Inwood (1983, 61ff.); and deVries (1991, 66).

complete, then proponents of immanent concepts could reply that these too are of some explanatory relevance, even if they rest on mechanisms; and if they are of some explanatory import, then they are not superfluous or eliminable.

It is true that one response to the regress problem would be to adopt and look to defend the view that everything is equally merely indifferent to everything else, or that there is no such thing as objective explanatory relevance or reason in the world. That is certainly a rival to Hegel's view, on which there are immanent concepts in virtue of which things do what they do. But this is not a mechanistic alternative, since it denies the explanatory import of mechanism too. And it cannot be supported by the natural sciences' tremendous success in discovering that mechanisms are of real explanatory importance, since this suggests, if anything, that something (mechanism) is more than merely indifferent. The alternative, then, is no form of pure *mechanism*; it is a "pure indifference" view; I turn to it in the next chapter. Hegel, of course, is looking to draw the opposite conclusion, namely, that there was no good reason in the first place to doubt the explanatory import of immanent concepts or kinds and their powers.⁶

1.2 Matter and Mechanism's Fundamentalist Fantasy

The above argument against pure or conceptless mechanism is incomplete, insofar as a proponent of pure mechanism might seek to avoid the infinite regress by proposing instead that there is a bottom, fundamental level of mechanistic explanation. Descartes, for example, seems to court no infinite regress, because he argues that the regress reaches a foundation with the underlying *matter*. The idea is that everything in nature can be explained by appeal to matter, which is to say by appeal to shape and motion.⁷ And so, after considering the initial regress argument in the "Mechanical Object" subsection, Hegel turns to consider the interactions of supposedly basic material bodies in "The Mechanical Process."

Of course, *pure* mechanism is already given up if the point is that matter is a basic kind, universal, or concept, in virtue of which particles do things like resist, attract, and so on. What pure fundamentalist mechanism would require is an account of matter that makes it different in kind from immanent concepts and powers or anything else similar.

⁶ See Schaffer (2003) for comparison in contemporary metaphysics: "infinite descent yields an egalitarian metaphysic which dignifies and empowers the whole of nature" (513).

⁷ See Hegel on Descartes at (VGP 20:152/3:247); and Descartes (1984, I:247).

One way a pure mechanist might try to make out this difference in kind would be to say that we can observe shapes and motions, but not anything like immanent concepts. Sometimes Descartes argues, for example, that we can observe how larger mechanisms work, and that everything in nature works this way, without need of unobservable forms or powers.⁸ And there is a sense in which we can look inside a clock, for example, and see how the size and shape of the gears produces the movement of the hands. But we do not literally observe the source of the explanatory import of a gear. Just imagine thinking of the gear and subtracting in thought everything like a power to resist penetration (or the power of the underlying electrons to repel one another), and then imagine its teeth passing right through the neighboring gear. Why does it *not* do that? If there are immanent concepts, characterized by powers, then they would provide an answer. But what we cannot literally observe is this or any rival answer to this question. Hegel sees a very general kind of mistake in this kind of account: We are tempted to think that the natural sciences provide so many answers that no metaphysical questions about reasons or explanatory relevance remain; and when we make that mistake we tend to imagine that what the natural sciences have discovered is that reason in the world is something empirically sensible, or graspable in imagistic terms. I call this the mistake of *sensibilizing* reasons.

But there is a much more compelling way to defend pure fundamentalist mechanism. Consider Boyle's famous thought experiment: when the first lock was built, it was in itself is merely "a piece of iron contrived into such a shape";⁹ only with the construction of the first key do lock and key acquire the capacities we think of as characteristic; but both, in themselves, are just iron with a certain shape. So we might argue in this way: The capacity or power of a kind of thing would be a merely *relational* feature, in the sense of being comprehensible only by thinking of something else, as for example by thinking that the key has the power to open the lock. Features like shape (the mechanist can argue) are not relational, in this sense, but non-relational or "categorical" as I will put it; they can be comprehended without thinking of others.¹⁰ So the more compelling idea is that merely relational features always need some further explanation, and that the regress of explanation must come to an end with something non-relational; and what the sciences have discovered in discovering the power of mechanistic explanations is that what stops the regress is more specifically the non-relational features of *matter*. Thus, all appeal to anything

⁸ E.g., Descartes (1984, I:286–87).

⁹ Boyle (1991, 23); see also Molnar (2003, 103) and Ott (2009, 143).

¹⁰ There are many ways to use these terms, so I mean to define my usage here.

merely relational, like an immanent concept or kind in virtue of which things have powers, would be superfluous.

But this mechanist fundamentalism raises a problem for which mechanism does not have a solution; and while some may hope that a solution is possible, it should be clear that it is impossible for a solution to be provided specifically by the successes of the natural sciences at finding mechanistic explanations.

The basic problem is this: Fundamentalist mechanism must hold that the powers or capacities of things cannot be brute, but must always rest on something underlying, which will ultimately be fundamental matter. So this matter must in some way support everything resting on it. Or, it must be such as to give rise to capacity A when arranged in fashion B, and so on. But then it sounds like fundamental matter itself must be such as to have the power to do things: to support what rests on it, or to give rise to different capacities when arranged in certain manners. And so by fundamentalist mechanism's own lights, this matter could not in fact be fundamental. Alternatively, if matter has no such powers, but only non-relational features, then nothing really rests on it, and it would not really render anything explanatorily superfluous.

We can compare theistic cosmological arguments. Imagine seeking to conclude, on the basis of a principle that everything requires a prior cause, that there must be an initial cause, God. This form of argument is subject to Schopenhauer's famous "hired cab" objection: the theist employs her principle to arrive at God, but would dismiss the principle before applying it to rule that there must be a cause of God. In terms of the turtle story, in the epigraph above, the principle would be that any turtle, in order to support turtles above, must be supported by a turtle below. And this is essentially the regress problem from the previous section: pure mechanism begins by insisting that any given level is superfluous because of the way it is supported by a level below; it neglects to draw the conclusion that this principle would then apply to all mechanistic levels too, rendering them superfluous as well. But rational theology at least has a story to tell about this kind of problem: Rational theology can begin with the principle that everything has some cause (whether external or internal); and it can argue that God is a necessary being, existing by nature, and in this respect uniquely self-causing. Thus, one can try, at least, to reconcile a divine ability to cause things with God's supposed unique lack of a need for a further external cause. In other words, God is not supposed to be just a last turtle, but more like a turtle with a jetpack. I mention the theistic story not in order to consider its prospects, but in order to point out that fundamentalist pure mechanism is trying something similar. For it requires an account of a last foundation in matter that is analogous to the God of rational theology: such matter must be able to support capacities or powers supposed to rest on it, but without matter itself needing to be supported in the same way by something else. The problem

here, however, is that we cannot tell the story that matter is somehow also like a turtle with a jetpack, because that would be precisely to give it a power: the power to support things without resting on anything else. And the pure mechanist view is supposed to be that powers always require further support from below. If we are going to just accept brute powers when we get to matter, then we could have also accepted them above that level.

Another way to approach the problem is to compare a difficulty for Descartes, which often motivates a recently popular idea that Descartes is a kind of occasionalist. Set aside familiar worries about mind-body causation in Descartes. The threat is that Descartes' attack on substantial forms is so general and sweeping that it can seem to leave nothing in matter in virtue of which one material body could itself affect another. And some read Descartes as resolving or tempted to resolve this problem by having God do all the work, following rules he has set for himself, also known as the laws of nature. As Garber puts it:

A basic move in Descartes' philosophy . . . was the elimination of these substantial forms. . . . But how, then, are we to explain the characteristic behavior of bodies? Descartes' strategy was simple. . . . [I]t is God, not substantial forms, that will ground the laws that govern bodies. (2001, 206)

Hegel emphasizes how Descartes' need for God to do work for material bodies stems from a lack of a concept (*Begriff*) that can do the job: "the extended substances cannot exist and subsist through themselves or their concept; they thus require every moment the assistance of God" (VGP 20:173/3:242). This might offer a coherent story, but it is no longer any form of *pure mechanism*, since what carries all of the explanatory weight is no longer matter or mechanism but God. Granted, the interpretive issues concerning Descartes' overall view are complex; I mean here only to look at some of his claims in order to gain a perspective on the problem for pure fundamentalist mechanism.

In "The Mechanical Process" subsection in the *Logic*, Hegel presents the problem for fundamentalist mechanism in this way: Imagine that there is some basic level, for example, with matter, where things have natures that are "self-enclosed," or categorical, or non-relational, so that we can comprehend them without thinking of relations to or effects on other things. But it cannot be in virtue of these things or their natures that anything else is affected: "If objects are regarded only as self-enclosed totalities, they cannot act on one another" (WL 6:415/634). By sticking to pure mechanism, shifting work away from the immanent concept or nature of things, we have lost a place for anything to affect anything else.

And Hegel says something similar here about the idea of mechanistic *causality*—or a causality of underlying material or physical parts—doing the work of pure mechanism in rendering superfluous any appeal to immanent natures or concepts of things. If we stick with pure mechanism, we cannot say that any object has a nature in virtue of which it causes anything:

In mechanism, therefore, the originary causality of the object is immediately a non-originariness; the object is indifferent to this determination attributed to it. (WL 6:415/635)

Note that this is not to dismiss causality, or to assert that nothing really causes anything. Hegel accepts that there can be causes and effects. He is arguing that, *under the hypothesis of pure mechanism itself*, nothing could be a cause. Or, causality could not mark any contrast to mere indifference, thus supporting any superfluity of immanent concepts and the like. But Hegel will preserve reasonable causality just as he preserves reasonable mechanism: causality too will have to be understood in terms of immanent concepts and their powers.

Again, some may feel that there might be a possible resolution of this problem for pure fundamentalist mechanism. But, even if there were, this would take the form of a coherent story about matter, parallel to the theistic story about God as a necessary being; and that would leave still to answer the question of the *justification* for that story. And I think it is easy to see that natural scientific discovery of mechanisms, no matter how successful, could not justify an account of matter as somehow similar to the God of rational theology. So this source of skepticism cannot really give reason to dismiss Hegel's immanent concepts.

One way to look at the impossibility here is to ask what natural science can discover, in discovering mechanistic explanations, which might render superfluous higher level kinds or concepts with powers or capacities. And the answer is that it can only discover lower level capacities or powers. For we can only observe how things affect us, whether directly or indirectly (via scientific instruments, for example). And from this we can draw inferences about those features in virtue of which things affect us, which is to say: capacities, powers, or dispositions. Again, we can perhaps render superfluous any supposed basic disposition of a basic natural kind *water*. But only by discovering the dispositions of the underlying electrons and the like. Consider Blackburn's version of the point, borrowing from the story about there being turtles all the way down:

When we think of categorical grounds, we are apt to think of spatial configurations of things—hard, massy, shaped things, resisting penetration and displacement by others of their kind. But the categorical credentials of any item on this list are poor. Resistance

is par excellence dispositional; extension is only of use, as Leibniz insisted, if there is some other property whose instancing defines the boundaries. . . . [M]ass is knowable only by dynamical effects. Turn up the magnification and we find things like an electrical charge. . . . But science finds only dispositional properties all the way down. (1990, 62–63)

In sum, the natural sciences may have had success in discovering underlying mechanisms and mechanical causes. But not in any sense that could suggest the existence of any purely “self-enclosed” or non-relational material basis for everything, and so the superfluity of all immanent concepts and powers.

1.3 Against External Forces and Laws as Real Grounds

The argument above might *still* seem to leave room for pure mechanism to defend itself, specifically by arguing that appeal to immanent natures or concepts is rendered superfluous insofar as we can always explain, instead, by appeal to *mechanistic forces* or *laws*, conceived of as something acting from *outside* of the explanatory regress threatened above.

I begin with forces. It should be no surprise here that Hegel is no more of a skeptic here than he is with respect to causality. He is arguing that there are further questions about forces. For example, what *is* a force? And Hegel is arguing that force, in order to be of explanatory relevance, must be inherent in the nature or concept of something. For example, again, “gravitation” is the “concept” of matter (EN §269). What pure mechanism might advocate, as a rival to Hegel’s view, would be different: forces are something *external* to things, not contained within any kind of immanent concepts or natures of things. Again we can compare rational theology: to the complaint that God too would require a cause, it will be responded that God grounds things from *outside* the regress of causes in time.

This response gives us a good opportunity to note how “Mechanism” and the following sections pull together strands of argument from earlier in the *Logic*. For the crux of Hegel’s engagement with the logic of appeal to external forces is found before “Mechanism,” back in the “Doctrine of Essence.” Most relevant here is the discussion of “The Real Ground” and a following remark; Hegel’s central example here is the possibility that forces operating externally are real grounds.

To evaluate the response, we must first set aside the mistake, noted above, of the *sensibilization* of reasons. For we can be tempted to think that forces are either material things or in principle observable; this is like thinking of forces as more billiard balls on the table, moving the others by bumping into

them.¹¹ But clearly this sensibilization cannot help pure mechanism. For if forces were just more material objects, then they could not help answer the question of how material objects act on one another; they would just be more of the objects that raise that question.

The alternative is to deny that forces are external to the material and sensible. But here too we meet a familiar question: in virtue of what do such external forces serve as the reason why material objects move as they do? One answer would be: it is in the nature of this kind of force to act in just this way. In Hegel's terms, that would mean there is an immanent concept of this kind of force. So this is no pure or conceptless mechanism. And, further, we have now posited the force as something unobservable so that it could do some explanatory work without need of anything like immanent concepts, and then found that we needed the immanent concepts anyway. On the face of it, it would be better to have skipped the intermediate step and just posited natures or concepts of the things whose behavior we want explained and have forces be part of that nature—rather than something additional that then needs a powerful nature of its own. Again, if we are going to accept a mere last turtle in the end, then why can't the first turtle be the last?

The problem, then, is that we have posited forces to do a specific job: to do the explanatory work relative to bodies moving around without powerful natures or immanent concepts. But we gain thereby no account of how the explanatory work gets done. In "Real Ground," Hegel notes that the tendency to claim ignorance about external forces is a symptom of this problem:

one . . . hears it repeatedly said—in spite of all the explaining done on the basis of well-known forces and matters—that we *do not know the inner essence* of these same forces and matters. This can only be seen as an admission that this method of explaining from grounds does not satisfy its own expectations, that it itself demands something quite different from such grounds. (WL 6:102/402)

And the "something quite different" that Hegel hints will be needed, back here in the earlier "Doctrine of Essence," will later be provided in the "Doctrine of the Concept" account of mechanism in terms of immanent concepts. Clearly in this complaint Hegel is thinking, in part, of Newton, as, for example, in the famous: "I have not as yet been able to deduce from phenomena the reason for these properties of gravity, and I do not feign hypotheses."¹² But it is important that Hegel is

¹¹ See, e.g., Hegel's worries about this temptation at (WL 6:101/401) and with respect to Newton (EN §270).

¹² Newton (2004, 92).

not here complaining about pleas of ignorance in general. The complaint is that the only reason for positing external forces was to do some work that we still do not know how they could do; if so, then there was no reason to posit them. We might just as well have not posited forces external to the nature of matter, and just said that we have not been yet able to deduce the reason for these properties of *matter*, namely the tendency of this kind of thing to attract, and so on. Otherwise we are stuck with a regress: we begin by holding that, when we cannot solve the problem of what does the explanatory work on one domain, we must avoid immanent concepts by positing something external to that domain to do the work; but then the same problem recurs with our posits, and the same logic would require us to posit meta-forces to do the work of having forces move bodies around; and the regress would continue on forever.¹³

Perhaps some would see an advantage in at least banishing from the material world all immanent concepts and the like, thinking that they would be more tolerable when confined elsewhere. Hegel, however, has a second line of attack here. Even if the work is to be done by external forces, then we will still need an analogous account of how physical objects are capable of being affected by such forces. What enables them to be pulled around? What is there for forces to hook onto, as it were? If we really posit external forces because we take physical objects to be utterly without a nature in virtue of which they are capable of doing what they do, then the threat is that we end up with two realms or sides—the forces and the physical objects—that turn out to be mutually indifferent. As Hegel says: “the two determinations of content are indifferent to each other,” so that what we are calling a “ground” cannot do the work of actually grounding anything: “this connection, since the determinations that it connects are an indifferent content, is also *not a ground*” (WL 6:104/403).¹⁴

The story about pure mechanism appealing to mechanistic *laws* is parallel to that concerning *forces*. Hegel does not deny that there are laws, but argues that they must be understood in terms of the immanent natures or concepts of things. Where there are laws of nature, this is because things like material bodies are such that “law is indeed immanent in them and it does constitute their nature and power,” as Hegel puts it at the end of “Mechanism” (WL 6:428/644). So the statement of a law of nature is a description of what is necessitated by the immanent concept or nature of things. The law is found

¹³ Again, I read the regress as without assumption of a standard of complete explanation; the advocate of external forces must promise on their behalf some explanatory payoff; if the regress continues because the payoff remains unpaid, then the posit was unjustified. Cf. the readings in Inwood (1983, 63–64); and Forster (1998, 65–66).

¹⁴ Cf. “solicitation of force” (PhG §137ff.).

right in the immanent nature of the kind of things.¹⁵ Or, as Hegel says earlier in the WL, “the existent world is itself the realm of laws.”¹⁶

A purely mechanistic alternative theory would argue that laws are rather *external* to the world of things that they govern. The idea would be to locate the laws in a stable, unchanging realm of laws hidden behind the flux of the physical world. But then we have the same problems as with external forces. First, a universal law itself would require a nature in virtue of which it governs as it does, or else the laws will need further laws to govern them, and so on. Second, so long as the things to be governed do not have natures in virtue of which they react as they do to some kind of governance, such external laws would be again simply a matter of indifference with respect to those physical things. In Hegel’s terms, we can call “nature” the realm of simple, unchanging laws, with “a manifold of determinations . . . to be externally added to it”; but then “these determinations do not have their ground in nature as such, which is rather indifferent with respect to them” (WL 6:106/405).

Now there is another way of conceiving the laws of nature, doing without immanent concepts and powers, and also without posited unobservable external laws or forces. We can instead hold the view that everything real is purely indifferent to everything else, and add that a law is just a regularity in, or a statement with the form of a generalization about, the arrangement of indifferent particulars. Back in the “Doctrine of Essence” of the WL, Hegel calls this “Formal Ground.” But this is no longer pure mechanism, because it holds that mechanism too is indifferent, and I turn to this in the next chapter. For now, the important point is that pure or conceptless mechanism cannot defend itself from Hegel’s attack by positing external forces or laws as real grounds. For the posit does not account for what does the explanatory work, and only puts off the need to appeal to immanent concepts or the like; better, then, to appeal to these from the beginning, and do without the posit.

1.4 Reasonable Mechanism and Immanent Concepts

We can understand the comprehensiveness of Hegel’s case against pure or conceptless mechanism in these terms: First, an endless regress without any external support—”only infinite turtles”, as I will call this scenario—is of no help to pure mechanism. Those who would privilege mechanism cannot appeal to

¹⁵ On Hegel’s accounting for laws in terms of concepts, I follow Kreines (2007). See also deVries (1988, esp. 180); Westphal (1989, esp. 144); and Stern (2009, esp. 25–28). On the particular case of the laws of matter as rooted in concepts, see Buchdahl (1973, esp. 10).

¹⁶ WL 6:153/503. Cf. Gadamer (1964, 148); and Bogdandy (1989, 34).

this scenario, because if one level is supposed to be superfluous on those grounds, then all will be. Second, a bottom mechanistic level or “last turtle”, as I will call this scenario, is also no help: either the bottom level includes immanent concepts in virtue of which things do what they do, or matter itself would have to be akin to the God of rational theology. Third, pure mechanism cannot solve the problem by appealing to something that acts from outside the regress: that something would require an immanent concept in virtue of which it does what it does, or else the result will be a regress of external grounds, and all of the same problems.

So Hegel argues that it is best to posit from the beginning immanent concepts in virtue of which things do what they do, as a primitive case of reason in the world, before even beginning on a regress to external grounds in unobservable forces, or a timeless realm of laws, and so on. Granted, the argument for Hegel’s positive view, we have seen, requires more attention to the possibility of denying all objective explanatory relevance, or reason in the world, in favor of pure indifference. Still, while discussing “Mechanism,” it is worth attending to the features of the positive view, as applied to the mechanistic cases.

The example Hegel focuses on in “Mechanism” is the rotation of matter around a center of gravity. We can explain this in terms of a nature of the underlying matter, in virtue of which it does what it does. Or, we can explain this in terms of a law, although only in the sense that the statement of a law is just a description of what is necessitated by the nature or concept of things.

This reasonable mechanism will make possible reasonable sorts of superfluity argument. Say, for example, someone were to propose that the planet Mercury has an inner nature in virtue of which it rotates so much more quickly than Jupiter. But if the rotation of the planets is explained by the concept of matter common to all material bodies, as Hegel maintains, then the claim that anything happens because of the special natures of Mercury and Jupiter will indeed be superfluous. It will be merely “arbitrary invention of causes,” as Hegel says in praising the importance of the discovery of laws:

arbitrary invention of causes . . . superstition, miracles, astrology, &c. disappeared; all this fades away owing to the contradiction offered to it by the knowledge of natural laws. (VGP 19:319/2:297)

In what cases *are* there immanent concepts for things? The answer is simple: in those cases where things fall under a concept, or belong to a kind, toward which what they do is not indifferent. The relevant contrast here is between genuinely immanent concepts and merely gerrymandered classifications.¹⁷

¹⁷ Compare, e.g., Lewis’s distinction between natural and “unnatural, gerrymandered, gruesome properties” (1986, 60).

Hegel offers a great example in his famous criticism of phrenology and the like. In short, someone with a relevant data set can freely choose any one of innumerable many ways to categorize bumps and indentations on the skull, looking for some way that will allow a correlation between skull bumps of type *X* and behavior of type *Y*. Hegel answers that these correlations would be

something indifferent and contingent . . . on a par with these: “it always rains when we have our annual fair” says the dealer; “and every time, too,” says the housewife, “when I am drying my washing.” (PhG §321)

Of course, in the ordinary sense we have a “concept” of “wash day,” and we can correctly distinguish days on which we do the laundry from those on which we do not; but the correlation is no reason to think that there is an immanent concept or nature of the kind *wash day*, because this way of thinking of the matter is merely indifferent to whether or not it rains. Similarly, in the ordinary sense, we have a concept of Sagittarius, and we can use it to distinguish some stars from others. But one’s fortunes do not change because of Sagittarius. Of course, given gravity, each of those stars has an influence on the movements of other bodies. But this is because those stars are material, not because they are Sagittarius. Also, someone might behave in certain ways because of a *belief* about Sagittarius, but that is due to the belief rather than Sagittarius. In general, nothing ever happens as it does because of Sagittarius itself as such; so there is no such immanent concept.

This is a good example of a case in which a position in the metaphysics of reason raises and shapes a specific epistemological question: How we are to know about whether there is or is not an immanent concept in any given case? In Hegel’s terms, we learn about universal laws and kinds or concepts by means of further “thinking over” empirical observations and experiments. The best way to understand the point is to compare it to what is now termed inference to the best explanation. We observe a repeating pattern in the positions of the planets and similar motions of moons. Thinking about the pattern allows us to infer the reasons for it: universal laws governing the motion of material bodies. So “thinking things over leads to what is *universal* in them” (EL §24R). Lecture notes attached to a nearby paragraph clarify:

we compare and seek to recognize the universal in each case. Individuals are born and pass away; the kind [*Gattung*] is what abides in them . . . present only for [those] thinking them over. The laws belong in this context as well, such as, for example, the laws of motion of the celestial bodies. (EL §21Z; cf. VL 15-16/12)

So we infer that there is a law “governing” all of these motions, or in virtue of which the planets move as they do, and the law is just a description of the powers inherent in the immanent concept, such as the immanent concept of matter. Hegel also emphasizes in the *Logic* the need not just for observation but active invention of different experiments to procure the observations that, on further thought, allow us to discern natures or immanent concepts (e.g., WL 6:521/714–15). (Note that this is not to say that Hegel’s *Logic* employs this empirical, experimental method; what we have seen of its method, so far, concerns a kind of conceptual thought experiment concerning whether something—pure mechanism—is even possible.)

Obviously, one could raise skeptical worries about such claims to empirical knowledge of immanent concepts. But one can raise skeptical worries about everything, and especially about everything in terms of which we might account for explanatory relevance. There can be no doubt that an evil demon, for example, could trick us into bad inferences about immanent concepts and laws. But this sort of skeptical worry will only be relevant here if it affects in different manners the alternatives to Hegel’s position. And such general skepticism affects us no matter what. If you think (contra Hegel) there are external forces or laws beyond the physical world, then evil demon skepticism would certainly threaten knowledge claims about these as well. Even if you just think that laws are a special form of redescription of external events in terms of regularities, evil demon skepticism would threaten knowledge claims about those events and so any regularities in them. And this brings out the respect in which the primary metaphysical focus raises a *secondary* epistemological problem—it is secondary in that it need not drag a metaphysical investigation into the primary business of epistemology, or refuting all forms of skepticism.

The same point applies to worries that an immanent concept account would be objectionably *obscure*. What matters is whether the relevant alternatives are less obscure. But they are not. Appealing to external forces in particular, or such real grounds in general, will be at least as obscure, insofar as it still requires something like a powerful nature for the forces. Laws as a special form of general descriptions, as we will see in Chapter 2, leave it obscure how appeal to a law could really explain anything.

Now one objection to the details of Hegel’s positive account of reasonable mechanism would be this: Hegel’s account holds that matter itself *strives* to do things or to exercise certain powers; but this contradicts the insight about *inertia*, which plays such an important role in the development of modern science.

The objection raises many different kinds of issues. Some of them concern claims Hegel makes about the topics of the natural sciences that go beyond what is needed and employed in the *Logic* defense of immanent concepts. It is, of course, unsurprising that Hegel, like any comparably remote figure in the

history of philosophy, makes some comments that conflict with subsequent results in the sciences. But those that are irrelevant to the argument at issue here must naturally be set aside. For our purposes, the important point is just that if Hegel's arguments for immanent concepts work, then they will apply to earlier theories about inertia as well. So to take on the topic we would have to ask what inertia is, and in virtue of what it has any explanatory relevance. One possibility is that we take the law of inertia to just mean that material bodies do not do anything of themselves at all. But it is hard to square this with gravitation. Granted, you can think of one body and say that a gravitational force is being impressed on it from outside. But then some other material body would be doing something, namely, impressing that force on the first. And the same would be true the other way around. Of course, you could still say that the forces here are external to the bodies; but we have seen how Hegel argues against this route. And we have seen the Hegelian arguments that would require that inertia, if it were to do any explanatory work, would have to be something that a body has in itself, or in the very nature of its own kind. And this is not far from how both Descartes and Newton write about inertia: a body "in so far as it is in itself" (*quantum in se est*),¹⁸ both say, continues in its present state of rest or motion.

Some will object to any appeal to anything like a *striving*. But this comes along with the very idea that things have concepts or natures in virtue of which they do what they do. Imagine two bodies attracting but initially held in place by other forces, before the other forces then diminish and the bodies accelerate toward one another. No one will say that the attractive force was initially not in their natures, and then later their natures changed. Rather, the bodies were mutually attracting all along. But they were initially countered. This is to say that it is in their nature to do something that can either be countered or be effective. That something is not accelerating, since they do not do *that* when countered. What they are always doing is *striving*.¹⁹

Hegel also has some additional and related ambitions in the "Mechanism" section. One is to argue against the view that nature is exhausted by one homogeneous kind or concept of underlying stuff, or against what we could call "homogeneous mechanism." A different possibility is that there are *also* laws that govern relations between fundamentally *distinct* kinds. Sometimes Hegel expresses this contrast as one between "mechanism" (homogeneity) and "chemism" (distinct interacting kinds); but sometimes he uses "mechanism" to cover both of them, insofar as both involve necessitation by immanent

¹⁸ On both, see Hoffman (2009, 301).

¹⁹ See, e.g., his gloss on gravity as "a *striving*" (WL 6:428/644). See also Molnar (2003, 94ff.), defending Aristotle's rejection of the view that something has its power only when exercising it at *Metaphysics* VI.3.

concepts, or are “included under natural necessity” (WL 6:438/652). For clarity, I will say that both are included under “mechanism in the broad sense,” or just under the “lawful.” In any case, Hegel would like to argue that a mechanistic universe, in the narrow homogeneous sense would be, unacceptably, a “totality indifferent to determinateness” (WL 6:429/645).

But we are here coming to many details about Hegel’s views on specific questions concerning the sciences. The important points here concern Hegel’s arguments addressing the specific underlying philosophical problems. For example, a problem is: What are forces and laws? And Hegel has an argument that we cannot understand these in terms of pure or conceptless mechanism. One further philosophical ambition that will be crucial below is this: Hegel aims to demonstrate that lawful concepts, like the concept of matter, are the least complete form of reason in the world, and that teleology is metaphysically prior. But this topic must be saved until after discussion of Kant’s Transcendental Dialectic argument that the issue of completeness cannot be avoided (Part II), and Hegel’s project of reconstructing metaphysics in light of the inescapability of issues concerning completeness of reasons (Part III).

1.5 Analysis in Terms of an Objective Account of Explanation

Before turning away from “Mechanism,” it is worth analyzing the overall argument in terms of what I call the “objective account of explanation.” We can understand the negative argument against pure or conceptless mechanism in these terms, and we can also understand more precisely in these same terms what other arguments we should expect to find before being convinced of the positive case for Hegel’s concept thesis.

When discussing explanation, philosophers often note respects in which it can be context-sensitive. For example, one might well propose that an explanation must be a statement in some language, and that one can explain something only if one employs a language understood by the specific audience asking “why?” If so, then what does and does not successfully explain would vary in the context of different audiences.

But it is a mistake to infer that explanation is entirely context-sensitive in all respects. For there might also be other necessary conditions to meet that are not contextual in this sense. Consider an example: I ask, “Why did I lose so much at poker yesterday?” The astrologist answers by describing the recent movements of the stars making up the constellation Sagittarius. In one sense, what he says might be true: those stars exist, and he might correctly describe their movements. But it is easy to understand why some will think that he still

fails to explain. One might think this is so because the movements of those stars are of no *explanatory relevance* to my fortunes; my fortune is *indifferent* to those movements. So we might propose:

Relevance condition: For *P* to explain *Q*, it must be the case that *P* is of some explanatory relevance to *Q*.

Of course, some audiences may *believe* in astrology, or it may *seem* relevant to them. But the idea here is that astrology still fails to successfully explain, because the relevance condition is objective: its demand does not vary across individuals in the manner of subjective states like seemings, beliefs, desires, and so on. To set aside astrology in this way, along with phrenology, and so on, we can employ a general kind of account of explanation:

An objective account of explanation: one on which there is an explanatory relevance condition that is objective, ruling out some potential explanations regardless of the context of factors which vary across individuals.²⁰

Again, an objective account of explanation, in this sense, need not involve any denial that explanation is also partly contextual. As I noted in the Introduction, objective explanatory relevance is what positivists tried to reduce to entirely epistemological terms, in terms of inference—unsuccessfully, in my view. And this objective account of explanation is not the same thing as a *causal* account of explanation, unless by “causal” is simply meant any kind of explanatory relevance. For it does not assume any priority of causality as a reason, or that causality can serve as the basis of an investigation of reason in the world.

It remains possible to reject the whole idea of objective explanatory relevance, of course; this, again, is the hole in the “Mechanism” argument when considered as a positive case for Hegel’s immanent concepts—the hole to be addressed in the next chapter.

But there is no similar hole in Hegel’s negative case against pure or conceptless mechanism. For pure mechanism *itself* requires such an objective account of explanation. To see why, imagine I pour some stuff out of my shaker into the liquid in my glass, and watch as it dissolves. And I ask my friend Argan: “Why?” Argan believes that it is of the nature of salt to dissolve in water, and so he answers “because this is salt, and that water.” But Boyle is also on hand and he replies: “Perhaps that is acceptable as a shorthand, but this is not really what is going on. Compare: the key does not open the lock because it is a key, but

²⁰ Compare again Kim (1994, 67).

because of its shape, and the same is true of the salt and the water.” Some audiences, however, may agree with Argan in thinking that it is simply the nature of salt to dissolve in water. But clearly the pure mechanist must hold that these audiences are mistaken, and that their proposal is merely superfluous, regardless of context. The proponent of pure mechanism, then, must hold what I have called an objective account of explanation.

The objective notion of explanation, however, is just as clearly inconsistent with pure mechanism. It is one thing to hold that, in cases like the salt, there is an underlying mechanistic explanation, where the real explanatory relevance lies. But the pure mechanist then adds that this is always the case, rendering everything equally of no explanatory relevance. And this leaves *mechanism* of no explanatory relevance, thus undercutting the initial claim that mechanism is where the real explanatory relevance lies. And that is why pure mechanism undercuts itself, and why appeals to mechanism may be reason to reject certain specific appeals to immanent concepts and powers, but cannot be reason to reject them altogether. Pure mechanism might escape this worry if it could provide some purely mechanistic or conceptless account of what does the explanatory work in mechanistic accounts, but it cannot. First, the appeal to non-relational features of matter leaves that matter powerless and unable to do the explanatory work; perhaps there is a solution to this problem that makes matter akin to the God of rational theology, but this would not be the upshot of any scientific discoveries of mechanism. Second, positing external forces or laws, or any kind of real grounds in this sense, makes no advance on the problem unless something like immanent concepts are also brought in. So appeals to mechanism provide no reason to doubt Hegel’s concept thesis. And they may in fact be testament to it—if we can later find more support for the very idea of objective explanatory import, or reason in the world.

Against Empiricist Metaphysics and for the Concept Thesis and the Metaphysics of Reason

For many philosophers today it will seem, after looking at “Mechanism,” that there is a stronger challenge to Hegel’s concept thesis. They will not want to confront the concept thesis with an attempt at a rival account of real relations of objective explanatory relevance in the world, or reason in the world—whether mechanistic or otherwise. They will rather want to confront the concept thesis with the view that there is no such thing as reason in the world, or the view that everything is purely indifferent to everything else; and they will want to join this with an account of explanation on which this need not have anything to do with objective explanatory relevance. Hegel associates such views with empiricism. And although Hegel does not emphasize this threat from empiricism as much as the threat from mechanism at the *Logic’s* conclusion, he does address it elsewhere. I will argue that Hegel has a strong rejoinder to this empiricism, and that considering it alongside his mechanism argument allows us a good initial vantage point on the broad philosophical support for the concept thesis and Hegel’s project within the metaphysics of reason. And it is worth considering this with care: it may not seem controversial to deny that Hegel has an empiricist metaphysics; but we need to see how far-reaching the point is, if we are to avoid accidentally returning to thinking in an empiricist manner, about (for example) regularities or patterns as themselves explanatory, so that varying complexity of patterns could itself distinguish fundamentally different forms of reason in the world, or objective explanatory relevance.

2.1 From Pure Indifference to Empiricist Laws and Explanation

The view I call “pure indifference” is frequently associated with Hume; I will also call it “humean,” with the lower-case “h” indicating neutrality with respect to whether it is really Hume’s view.¹ Hume does at least provide useful terms for discussing the view:

All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem conjoined, but never connected. (1975b, 74)

So a “humean” holds that all reality is composed of “loose and separate” particulars or (now in Hegel’s terms) mutually “indifferent” particulars. There are no necessary connections, for example. From one thing or its nature, nothing ever must follow. Nothing else is ever a reason in the world for anything else. So there are, in particular, nothing like immanent concepts in virtue of which certain effects must follow. Terminology from David Lewis’s more recent humeanism provides a powerful image: “humean supervenience” is “the doctrine that all there is to the world is a vast mosaic of local matters of particular fact, just one little thing and then another.”² So reality is akin to a mosaic, exhausted by individual tiles whose features would have allowed them equally well to have been placed in any conceivable other arrangement.

A pressing question for this kind of view is how it will account for the notion of explanation, if everything is at base merely indifferent. One especially extreme option would be that explaining requires only providing a description of something that satisfies whoever is asking “why?” given their subjective interests and beliefs. But a problem for such views should already be clear: They cannot hold that appeals to phrenology or astrology, for example, fail to explain *regardless of who is asking “why?”* It would be better, then, to have a demanding account of explanation, with some constraint on explanation independent of variation in subjective states like belief. I think that the strongest views in this neighborhood will turn on an empiricist conception of the laws of nature, on which a law is just a regularity in the arrangement of loose and separate particulars; or, alternatively, a law is just a statement of a regularity, a universal generalization, or a statement of the form “all *F*s are *G*s.” We could then hold that explaining something also requires, in addition to any

¹ Concerning the recent debate about Hume, see, e.g., Winkler (1991).

² Lewis (1986, ix).

other conditions, subsuming it under such a “law” or generalization. And, assuming that there are no truly universal generalizations about phrenology and astrology, we could exclude such accounts from successfully explaining, regardless of context, but without appealing to anything like objective explanatory relevance: we appeal only to regularities in the arrangements of mutually indifferent particulars.

Note the character of this issue about laws. The natural sciences seek to discover what is and what is not a law: they formulate candidate laws, test them, and seek to discover which are really laws of nature. About this topic, current science has moved far beyond anything that Hegel—or Hume—is in a position to know. But there is also a philosophical issue here, namely: What is it to *be* a law? And there is no indication that the sciences alone have resolved that issue, or promise to resolve it, or have rendered such debate obsolete.

The most important issue for this chapter is the broad contrast between humean or regularity accounts, on the one hand, and anti-humean accounts, on the other. There are, to be sure, different varieties of anti-humean accounts, and I will return to what is distinctive of Hegel’s at the conclusion of this chapter. But with respect to the broad contrast, what is distinctive of humeanism is taking the statement of a law to refer to all of the particular events collected under a universal generalization. It follows that humean accounts deny that laws *govern* what happens, or are a form of *reason* for what happens; for, on the humean account, everything is indifferent to everything else, and laws summarize the arrangement of indifferent particulars. Thus, contemporary humeans say that laws “don’t govern the evolution of events.” Rather, they “summarize events” (Loewer 1996, 115). The humean conception is a “descriptive” or “non-governing” conception of laws (Beebe 2000).

So what distinguishes anti-humeans, in general, is that they hold that the statement of a law does *not* refer to a pattern or regularity, and so to a great many particulars; it refers rather to something else that *governs* those particulars, and that is thus the *reason* for any pattern or regularity in them. Generally this “something else” will be something like universals, natural kinds, or Hegel’s immanent concepts. Hegel clearly accounts for laws in terms of those concepts. Hegel rejects views, then, on which a “law does not have its truth in the concept” (PhG §249). And Hegel does not hesitate to say that laws of nature *govern*, or that they are one form of the *reason* that governs the world:

The movement of the solar system is governed by unalterable laws; these laws are its reason. But neither the sun nor the planets

which revolve around it are conscious of them. . . . [T]here is reason in nature. . . . [I]t is governed by unalterable universal laws.³

But until I reach the end of this chapter and assemble a larger case for Hegel's specific alternative, the focus here will be rather on his general case for the rejection of empiricist views.

To begin with, it is easy to see that Hegel recognizes and rejects the pure indifference view, and humean accounts of laws with it.⁴ He does so, for example, in the introductory discussion of empiricism in EL. Here he sketches an epistemological motivation for humeanism. The empiricist idea is that we should recognize the reality only of what shows up in sense perception, and what shows up is loose and separate:

empirical observation indeed affords us perceptions of changes *following upon one another*, of objects *lying side-by-side* but no connection involving necessity. (EL §39)

With respect to universal laws of nature, Hegel himself takes this empiricist or pure indifference view to mean the denial of their existence: it “contests the universal determinations and laws on the grounds that they lack justification through sensory perception” (EL §39R). But Hegel also recognizes that empiricists themselves do not agree; they rather advocate an empiricist reconception of the universal laws of nature in terms of their “form”:

empiricism raises the content belonging to perception, feeling, and intuition to the *form of universal representations, sentences, and laws*, etc. This happens, however, only in the sense that these universal determinations (e.g. force) are to possess no other meaning and validity for themselves than that taken from perception. (EL §38)

Take the law of gravity, for example. The law would be the regularity in perceivables described by its formula, which has the form of a generalization. Even the force of gravity would be that regularity.

³ VPG 12:23/34. Hegel here glosses a view Anaxagoras “was the first” to hold; Hegel adopts the view but puts it to his own very different purposes, especially insofar as he is ultimately arguing that the laws of nature are the weakest form of governing reason. See the similar connection between universal laws and reason in the world at (WL 30/5:45), and the rejections of humeanism cited immediately below.

⁴ For a rejoinder to my view, and an argument that Hegel is actually a humean in this respect, see McCumber (2013, 63ff.).

Hegel clearly rejects these empiricist views, here at the beginning of the EL and elsewhere as well. One important rejoinder is contained in the “Ground” section of the “Doctrine of Essence.” I discussed above Hegel’s case there against “real ground” (§1.3). But this is actually one horn of a dilemma for views that do not yet have access to Hegel’s account of “the concept,” which comes later in the *Logic*. On the other horn of the dilemma, we find the view that laws are not a real ground external to things; rather, laws are only a special type or *form* of statement about things, or a “formal ground” (WL 6:96/397ff.).⁵ It will take this whole chapter to build toward an account of the great force of Hegel’s argument here, but the basic idea is this: If someone asks why something happens, and you reply with the required form of generalization, then you are only providing a more general description of what happens in this case, along with others; you have not yet done anything to *explain why*. On such a “formal ground” account of laws: “the assigning of a ground remains a mere formalism, the empty tautology of repeating,” and nothing is “explained by this formalism” (WL 6:98/400).⁶

Hegel lodges other complaints against such views of laws as well; for instance, they fail because they cannot connect laws with necessitation: if we hold that “the *truth of the law* is in *experience*,” so that “the law does not have its truth in the concept,” then a law is “not a necessity, that is, not really a law” (PhG §249). So, leaving aside further interpretation and evaluation of the arguments for the moment, it is easy to see that Hegel does reject such accounts.

The situation is similar with the basic view of the contents of reality as exhausted by mutually indifferent particulars: Hegel clearly disagrees. Here “empiricism, carried out consistently, limits its content,” and in a way that Hegel relates to what he will call “[t]he fundamental delusion in scientific empiricism” (EL §38R). He often complains that the empiricist view allows concepts to be only something abstracted from experience of indifferent particulars. In general, Hegel rejects the pure indifference view.

With respect to the force of Hegel’s arguments, however, matters are not yet so clear. For one thing, we have not yet considered the strengths to be claimed by the empiricist views, namely: epistemological advantages, freedom from objectionable metaphysics and incoherent notions, and greater simplicity. Further, there is a basic problem for attempts, like Hegel’s, to argue against

⁵ Cf. the similar dilemma in “Force and Understanding” in the *Phenomenology*, and on this Pippin (1991, 134–37); and Siep (2000, 95–96).

⁶ This point is well explained in Inwood (1983, 60–63); Forster (1998, 66); and Longuenesse (2007, 99). See also a similar, earlier argument (PhG §155). As discussed in §2.4, this remains a popular rejoinder to humeanism.

empiricism. True, one can try to argue, as Hegel does, that empiricist laws do not really *explain* anything, or do not carry the right sort of *necessity*. To this empiricists will respond, however, that we are resting weight on illegitimate notions of *explanation* and *necessity*. For the whole point of the empiricist's view is that *all* such notions too need to be reconceived in terms of the pure indifference view. The result can seem to be a stalemate; and we need to see if Hegel's case could break it.

2.2 Hegel's Rejoinders to Epistemological Arguments

I turn now to Hegel's response to epistemological arguments for humeanism; this response also provides a general model of his defense of the project of the metaphysics of reason against epistemological arguments. As noted above, the relevant empiricist epistemological arguments focus on the idea that sense perception reveals nothing but loose and separate events. So a special problem is supposed to arise with respect to metaphysical objects, from necessary connections to immanent concepts and natures: we cannot have knowledge of these, due to their absence from sense perception. But such arguments merely presume that sense perception can itself explain the possibility of knowledge or justification or the like:

Humean scepticism makes the *truth* of the empirical, of feeling and intuition its foundation, and from there contests the universal determinations and laws on the grounds that they lack justification through sensory perception. (EL §39R)

The problem is that, if skeptical considerations bear this weight, then so should skepticism about whether sense perception is sufficient justification for knowledge of loose and separate events. Hegel tends to think of this point in terms of his preference for ancient over modern skepticism, because it (on Hegel's account) emphasizes that skeptical worries generalize:

Ancient scepticism was so far removed from making feeling or intuition the principle of truth that to the contrary it turned first and foremost against the sensory. (EL §39R)

As Hegel puts the point elsewhere, "Sextus says skepticism is no selection of dogmas" (VGP 19:365/2:345).⁷

⁷ On Hegel on skepticisms, see especially Forster (1989).

I have set out of consideration the question of what Hume's own views are; the question here is whether skeptical considerations can support humeanism about indifference and laws. Perhaps some would complain that Hegel considers only an insufficiently detailed empiricist argument. To better fill in the details, the humean would need to establish why some particular skeptical problem should be the principle by which we should adjudicate matters here, and establish a sharp line with respect to that skeptical problem between the case of loose and separate particulars and everything else (such as necessary connections, immanent concepts, governing laws, etc.). And we can further illustrate the difficulties here by considering one such attempt. Imagine a humean were to give this more complete argument: "If you were to take some evidence to justify claiming the existence of governing or necessitating laws, then you would be allowing your own concepts or conceptual scheme to shape how you interpret the evidence. But for all you can know, this might just as well be misinterpretation of the evidence, caused by the imposition or mediation of your concepts. Therefore we cannot have knowledge of governing laws, and we should understand the laws of nature rather as regularities in loose and separate events."

This does specify a skeptical problem, which we might call "mediation skepticism." But Hegel has two lines of thought that would each independently be sufficient for a rebuttal. The first is Hegel's argument that there is no sharp line with respect to mediation, because all sources of justification available to us are mediated by concepts, as Hegel famously argues in the "Sense Certainty" section in the *Phenomenology*.⁸ And this is one part of his broader case, emphasized at the beginning of the EL, against claims to supposedly immediate forms of knowledge (EL §§61ff.). In historical terms, the "champions of empiricism" followed Bacon and "thought they could by observations, experiments and experiences, keep the matter in question pure"; but they cannot make do "without introducing concepts," and they introduce these "all the more poorly because they thought that they had nothing to do with concepts at all" (VGP 20:83/3:181).

It is worth noting that Hegel's complaint about empiricism is similar to Sellars's rejection of "the myth of the given" in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," as Sellars himself points out. But it is sometimes said that this connection is reason to think that Hegel, in virtue of this, is pursuing a "non-metaphysical" project.⁹ But Hegel's point in criticizing empiricist appeals to sense perception as a "foundation" (EL §39R) is to *defend a metaphysics*: to defend "universal determinations and laws" (EL §39R) that do not, contra empiricists, concern only "objects *lying side-by-side* but no connection involving necessity" (EL §39). Further, Hegel's rejoinder to empiricism does

⁸ See, e.g., the excellent treatment in deVries (2008).

⁹ "Hegel is non-metaphysical on this view ... more generally because he is seen as rejecting any idea of the given" (Lumsden 2008, 52).

not commit him to focus his project on a comprehensive account of knowledge or intentionality that overcomes the myth of the given. It is sufficient to argue, as Hegel does here, that the empiricist *himself* enlists skeptical considerations, and then is ultimately undercut by them.

In any case, there is also a second independent reason to reject the argument from mediation skepticism. Imagine there were a defense of the claim that perception, without being conceptually mediated, could justify conclusions about loose and separate events. Still, there are also other skeptical worries: evil demon skepticism, ancient skeptical problems, and so on. The details I filled in above do nothing to demonstrate that we should adjudicate the metaphysics on the basis of only mediation skepticism. And since those other forms of skepticism do still threaten claims about the loose and separate events we perceive, there still is here no justification for the empiricist view in question. Nor is it sufficient for humeans to say that one or another anti-skeptical strategy is bound to work; they would need a specific winning strategy in order to show that it specifically saves knowledge of loose and separate particulars, but not anything more.

It may seem that an empiricist could argue that, although there is no sharp line, (i) we should prefer to account for reality and laws in relatively safer terms, epistemologically speaking, and (ii) our knowledge of loose and separate events is relatively safer than our knowledge of anything like governing laws, immanent concepts, or similar. But, even if we grant (ii), the principle (i) would force us to the safest forms of humeanism, which would be otherwise very unappealing. For example, we could take the laws of nature to be regularities in *just the observations we have made up to this point*. This is certainly safer than the alternative that would require regularities extending to what we have not observed.¹⁰ But this would be unappealing, as it would make what is a law of nature depend on what observations we have made, so that I might change what is and is not a law of nature by choosing whether to look in a certain direction. The same applies to the idea of recognizing as real only what is observable: it would be safer still to recognize as real only what we have actually observed. Further, it would be yet safer to limit ourselves only to what is *currently* being observed. And probably safer still to prefer a solipsistic account of reality and laws, referring only to *my own current* sense perceptions.

Hegel elsewhere adds an affirmative case that epistemological considerations actually tell *against* humean accounts of the laws of nature. To see the point, imagine you often use an opaque gumball machine. You observe it day after day for years dispensing first a little red gumball, and then the next time a large blue one, and then this repeats. But imagine that you have an unshakable commitment to a kind of humeanism about the machine, or to the view that which gumball comes

¹⁰ Following Railton (1989).

next is always *indifferent* to what came out previously, or the view that each gumball event is always *loose and separate*, without anything *governing* the order. You could then never, consistent with this commitment, draw any conclusions about any probable pattern in future gumballs, nor even a probable next gumball. Of course, in practice, enough observations would lead anyone to draw the inference about the probable next gumball. But this is to infer that there is something *governing* the order, some *reason* for the order. To make such inferences, then, is to give up the commitment to there being no such reason or governing, or to give up the commitment to humeanism about the machine. And now we need only apply the analogy to nature: in practice, on observing a regularity, we would infer what comes next, and the order to come in all future cases. But to act in this way, drawing the inference, is to contradict or give up the empiricist commitment to there being nothing governing the order of things. The *Phenomenology* makes the point by saying that empiricism contradicts itself when it allows inferences *from* not all but just some of the experienced events *to* all cases:

it refutes its own supposition in its act of taking its universality not to mean that *all singular* sensuous things must have provided evidence for the appearance of law in order for it to be able to assert the truth of the law. (PhG §250)¹¹

I will not rest any weight on this last turn from defense to offense, however. I conclude simply that, for humeanism, the best thing that can be said about epistemological considerations is that they are no reason to prefer humeanism, or no reason to doubt views more like Hegel's concept thesis and his project in the metaphysics of reason.

2.3 Against Charges of Objectionable Metaphysics and Incoherent Notions: Reason as Basic and Unavoidable

The humean, however, will also argue that his view has other advantages, specifically by arguing that there is something objectionably metaphysical about accounts of governing laws, or laws as reasons, and the like. To the charge of objectionable metaphysics, Hegel gives a *tu quoque* response, arguing that humeanism itself is unknowingly metaphysical: “[t]he fundamental delusion in scientific

¹¹ Following Suchting (1990) on this material. Compare also Hegel (VL §38) on Kepler's method in the lectures on logic. Armstrong (1983, 52) gives a contemporary version of this argument against humeanism.

empiricism is always that it . . . contains and pursues metaphysics . . . in a completely uncritical and unconscious fashion” (EL §38R). Now it is easy to see at least a minimal sense in which this is true: humeanism too is a view about the nature of reality. True, it does without anything like a metaphysics of necessary connections, immanent concepts, and the like; but it is a view that specifically privileges the reality of the loose and separate particulars. That metaphysics, and its admirable simplicity, is doing a great deal of work for humeans, and is what will make it worth it—if it is worth it—to reconceive of laws, necessity, explanation, and so on.

But Hegel’s rejoinder will turn out more powerful still than this initial look suggests. To see its strengths, we must consider first another humean line of argument, namely, the humean argument that rivals are built on *incoherent* notions, like the notion of basic necessitation, or the notion of governing laws, or the notion of objective explanatory relevance/reason in the world. Hume seems to give this kind of response, for example, to one way of trying to think of objects as non-indifferent:

when we say we desire to know the ultimate and operating principle, as something, which resides in the external object, we either contradict ourselves, or talk without a meaning. (1975a, 267)

A *tu quoque* response, parallel to the above, will apply here as well. To see why, consider the humean desire for the simplicity of holding that all there is to the world are loose and separate events. Can the humean preserve this simplicity but add that there are *also* laws? Yes. He simply needs, to that end, a specific way of understanding the relation between the laws and the loose and separate events. Hegel proposes some terminology for the empiricist view, which he calls at this point “observing consciousness”: such a law is not “in and for itself” (PhG §249), but only “in” experience, or the loose and separate. But humeans should be allowed their own terminology, so we can also look to contemporary humeanism here. Schaffer says that humean laws “reduce” to loose and separate events, or what happens. Schaffer specifies that “reduction” is an “ontological relation, expressing dependence”:

As a relation of dependence, the intended notion of reduction may be glossed in terms of *grounding*. What reduces is grounded in, based on, existent in virtue of, and nothing over and above, what it reduces to. (2008, 83)

There is a lot going on here, but part of the idea is to clarify that reduction is a kind of dependence relation, and one that is worldly rather than one that is limited to relating conceptions or theories.

Whatever terms a humean uses to earn the desired simplicity, however, these terms can be used to defend anti-humeanism against charges of incoherent notions. An anti-humean need only say to the humean: I agree with you that there is such a thing as *worldly dependence*, in the sense of a dependence that is not just a relation between theories or definitions. You humeans recognize a specific form of this dependence, namely, the form in which *X reduces* to *Y*, so that the *X* is *nothing over and above* the *Y*. For example, your laws *reduce* to what happens. But return now to the more general idea of *worldly dependence*. My anti-humean proposal is simply that what happens stands in another kind of relation of *worldly dependence* to the laws of nature. That is what I mean when I say that the laws are the “reason” for what happens, or have “objective explanatory relevance” to or “govern” what happens. Granted, I do not propose that what happens more specifically *reduces* to the laws. I simply propose that there are at least two specific forms of the more general *worldly dependence*: (i) your *reduction*; and (ii) the *governing* of events by laws of nature. Hegel will provide grounds for favoring his own terminology of *reason* in the world over the terminology of *worldly dependence* (Part III). But the important point here is just that humeans must recognize something like a general notion of *worldly dependence*, and that it can have more specific forms; so they are in no position to lodge the incoherence charge against anti-humeans.

Twentieth-century humeans, it is true, sometimes tried to formulate humeanism without appeal to a metaphysics of ontological dependence, employing instead a notion of “supervenience” (e.g., Lewis 1999, 29). But to do without a metaphysics of dependence is to fail to earn humean simplicity. Such supervenience would be correlation across possible worlds. To *just* say that laws supervene on the particulars leaves open whether there might be a dependence in one direction, *or* the other, *or* something else on which both depend. To borrow and modify an image from Wilson (2005): Imagine there are spatio-temporal particulars, *and* ontologically distinct laws involving universals, *and* also a God whose nature necessitates keeping both these independent existences in sync. Supervenience would be satisfied—there could not be any difference in the laws without a difference in particulars—without humean simplicity. So humeans need to assert more, a kind of dependence, to earn the simplicity of the claim that all there is to reality are loose and separate particulars.

It is worth considering also another way of advancing the charge about incoherent notions. Loewer complains, for example, about the anti-humean notion of “governing”: it is obviously not meant to be literal political governing, but it also cannot be *causality*, so the meaning seems obscure.¹² However, we can now see that humeans are in the same position: patterns in the mosaic

¹² Loewer (1996, 111 and 115).

have a worldly dependence on the locations and features of the tiles; but this dependence relation would equally fail to be a form of causality. If that makes a view objectionably obscure, then humeanism shares that fate.

More importantly, the notion of causality cannot adjudicate the issue. On the contrary, the moment we turn to causality, all of the same issues arise. Here too there will be a humean or regularity view: for some *P* to cause some *Q* would be for all *P*s to be succeeded by *Q*s. And there will be anti-humeans, holding that causality must be rather a specific form of worldly dependence, so that *Q*'s occurrence depends on *P*'s. What we are discovering, as we step through these debates, is the fundamentality of the question of *what is a reason for what*. We need the basic and general notion of one thing being a reason for another in order to engage *any* of these debates. And so we should accept that notion as basic and proceed to consider what specific forms of reason there really are, which directions they run in different cases, and how they relate to one another. This point can be expressed in contemporary terminology as well, but it requires stretching a bit beyond the usage generally intended. Schaffer, for example, speaks of "ontological dependence" and "grounding." Part of his point is to distinguish a special sort of worldly dependence in *metaphysics*, parallel to but *distinct* from cases like the causality of interest in the natural sciences. My point here is that we need a more general notion of *worldly dependence*, or (better) *reason in the world*, in order to open up in a parallel manner all the questions and possible positions concerning laws, causality, and so on.¹³

In any case, we can now easily find yet more force in Hegel's *tu quoque* response to empiricism. Empiricists practice metaphysics, and not only in the generic sense that they make claims about what exists. Rather, a humean is practicing the metaphysics of reason: he too is sorting out what is prior and what secondary, according to what is a reason for what. A humean might think he rejects metaphysics, but really is assuming an approach to metaphysical issues in sensibilized terms. For example, we have sense experience of how *one* whole mosaic pattern emerges from the placement of *many* tiles. A humean would like to understand entirely in this way the categories of and relations between *one* and *many*, and then all of metaphysics. Thus the details of Hegel's charge:

The fundamental delusion in scientific empiricism is always that it uses the metaphysical categories of matter, force (not to mention those of the one, the many, universality, and infinity, etc.), and proceeds to make *inferences* guided by such categories . . . ignorant that

¹³ See especially Schaffer (2009). The notion of "worldly dependence" here, then, is closer not to Schaffer's "grounding" but to Kim's (1994) notion of a "metaphysical dependence" that is the "correlate" of explanation, where this can but need not be specifically causal.

in so doing it itself contains and pursues metaphysics and that it uses those categories and their relationships in a completely uncritical and unconscious fashion. (EL §38R)

Clearly Hegel's view is that we are better off recognizing that we are pursuing metaphysics, so that we can critically reflect on what we should best say about it.

To note that humeanism is also a program within the metaphysics of reason is not to deny that there is an important contrast with Hegel's view; rather, it allows better appreciation of what the real contrast is. First of all, thinking of the general character of the two broader views, rather than laws specifically, the difference is this: *The humeans* allow reason in the world only in cases of reduction. Their reality is entirely static or passive in this respect—no tile can, as it were, reach out and support or be a reason for or impact any other tile. *Hegel* holds that the world is not static or passive: just to start with, even things like material bodies have natures, in virtue of which they do what they do. And that only begins to make room for the yet more active forms of reason with which Hegel will ultimately populate the world, beginning with the teleological cases considered below.

And now come back to the difference with respect to the laws of nature specifically. We have seen that all sides agree in seeing something like worldly dependence here, or reason. *Hegel* holds that some (not all) phenomena can be explained by laws of nature, and that these are cases where what happens depends on the laws, or the laws are the reason. What is surprising is that humeanism is at base simply the opposite view about laws. After all, laws are supposed to be regularities. And whether there is a regularity depends on the features and arrangement of loose and separate events. Say, for example, that " $F = ma$ " is a law. Humeans say that its being a law depends on the actual movements of material bodies in one case, the next case, and so on for all particular cases. So what the laws are *depends* on what happens. Or, what happens is the *reason* for the laws. The disagreement, then, is most fundamentally about which is the reason for which, or about the directionality of reason in the world.

2.4 Breaking the Stalemate: Hegel's Argument from Explanation

We have seen that there is no support for humeanism to be found in epistemological arguments, nor in charges of objectionable metaphysics or incoherent notions. We can now turn back to Hegel's strongest argument *against* humean accounts of laws. This is the argument from the notion of explanation: if a law

is just a special type or form of redescription of events, then appeal to a law would not *explain* what happens (WL 6:98/400; cf. PhG §155).

The charge relies on an approach to explanation built on the notion of objective explanatory relevance: laws as formal grounds would not explain events, because they fail to appeal to something of objective explanatory relevance to those events. Rather, they just appeal to those very events, describing them in general or summary terms, along with others. The humean will, naturally, respond by opposing such accounts of explanation. He will try to argue that the notion of explanation itself needs a humean revision in light of the fact (as he sees it) that everything is indifferent to everything else, so that there is no such thing as objective explanatory relevance. And so he will say that humean laws “explain” in a humean sense—a sense with the only objective constraint being the requirement to describe the explanandum in a manner or form that places it in the context of wider regularities. Thus, he will fight here to at least a stalemate and claim to win on grounds of the attractive simplicity of humeanism.

In fact today we still find anti-humeans repeating (if unknowingly) Hegel’s charge that humean laws would not explain anything, and humeans responding in the manner just sketched.¹⁴ It is true that more recently there have been increasingly complex versions of humean accounts of laws, especially with the development of “best system” versions, or the “Ramsey-Lewis view.”¹⁵ But these accounts are still humean in the sense relevant here: they still take laws to be universal generalizations. So they still make the specific claim that is the target of the attack via explanation.¹⁶

There is something different, however, about Hegel making this argument specifically in the context of his *tu quoque* response to humeanism. In short, this has the power to break the stalemate. To see why, we need not initially contest the question of which notion of explanation is best or correct. We can begin just by stipulating that my objective notion of explanation is *one possible notion*. Again, to explain (in this sense) requires identification of something that stands in a relation of objective explanatory relevance to the explanandum, or a reason for it in the world. What forms you think objective explanation can take will depend on what forms of explanatory relevance (or reasons) you think exist. The humeans, we have seen, must believe in one form of objective explanatory relevance: the form in which the overall pattern depends on the feature and locations of the mutually indifferent elements. So humeans

¹⁴ E.g., Armstrong (1983, 40).

¹⁵ E.g., Beebe (2000). Kitcher (1986) argues that Kant has such an account; I argue that Kant is more of an inflationist on laws (Kreines 2009), but I will not assume this here.

¹⁶ For a contemporary version of the humean reply noted here, see Loewer (1996, 113).

must agree that there is this one kind of case in which explanation (objective sense) is really possible: we can explain (objective sense) a mosaic pattern by appealing to the tiles, and so on with anything similar in this respect.

But can *laws of nature* figure in explanations in the objective sense? On Hegel's account, yes: where there is a law, it can be the reason why events occur. Or, in Hegel's more specific version of anti-humeanism, what is going on in such cases is that an immanent concept is the lawful reason why something does what it does. So we can explain (objective sense) such events, like the rotation of the solar system, in terms of laws of nature, in this sense.

But what will a humean say here? He holds that the laws depend on what happens, not the reverse. So he will have to deny that you can give an explanation (objective sense) of the movement of the planets by appealing to the laws. And he must actually say the reverse: we can explain (objective sense) why there are laws of motion, and what they are, by appeal to what actually happens. This seems backwards. Surely science seeks to explain things. But we do not start out with knowledge of laws and seek to know what happens in order to explain why those laws are laws. We begin by observing what happens. And we seek laws in order to explain why it happens.

This is perhaps no surprise, but rather part of the reason why humeans will not want to put much stock in anything like my objective account of explanation. Yet it is not clear how they can avoid it, once it is clear how their own view requires similar notions. Consider the point by imagining a story: Imagine we land on an island that seems never to have been visited by intelligent creatures and discover a previously unknown and very smooth kind of rock with no easily discernible parts, but where each specimen has an interesting spiral red and blue pattern on it. A group of scientists naturally want to explain why there is this pattern here. First of all, they take out their microscopes and they find that the surface of the rock is not so seamless as it appears; it is actually a mosaic of microscopic blue and red flecks, arranged in a spiral pattern. At this point, humeans will agree that they have an explanation (objective sense) of the pattern in terms of its underlying elements. But then imagine the scientists turning their attention to explaining, in terms of laws of nature, why these flecks consistently come to be arranged in a spiral pattern. It seems a natural step. And it seems, if anything, a turn toward a *more* ambitious inquiry. But the humean must say something strange here: the scientists, just in turning their attention toward laws, actually *lower* their explanatory ambitions in an important respect. In whatever sense they now seek explanation, this would have to be a sense that has dropped an ambitious requirement: it no longer requires discovery of any form of objective dependence. But this is ad hoc: the only reason to say that there is a covert lowering of explanatory ambition in turning to laws is to try to save some sense in which appeal to humean laws

would explain. The anti-humean has no such difficulty, in that she can say that the scientists still seek explanation in just the same general sense: in both cases they seek objective explanatory relevance; in the first case they seek it in the form of reduction; in the second case, in the form of governing by laws.

And this is why there is such stalemate-breaking force to Hegel's charge that empiricist or humean laws would not explain anything, when lodged in the context of his metaphysics of reason. For Hegel is right, first, that the humean cannot avoid metaphysics of reason: the humean must earn his desired simplicity with a notion of worldly dependence. So the humean cannot entirely reject the idea of an objective notion of explanation. And then he is stuck with a view on which the objective explanatory relevance goes the wrong way, and cannot accommodate the commonly accepted idea that appeal to the laws of nature can explain what happens. There is, then, a great deal of force to Hegel's conclusion, concerning empiricist laws, that nothing is "explained by this formalism."

There is a sense in which all of this leaves standing the empiricists' claim that there is an attractive simplicity to their view. Certainly the empiricist metaphysics is simpler than Hegel's: it has only one kind of reason in the world. But there are also respects in which matters are more complex here. In particular, the properties instantiated by humean particulars turn out to require a surprisingly ambitious and complex metaphysics of properties; I will return to this point in chapter 8. But, in any case, it is not true that humeanism is simpler than all forms of anti-humeanism. For it is always possible to hold this view: whatever we say about laws, they would have to be something that explains; so the right theory of what a law would be is anti-humean; but for reasons of simplicity we should conclude that all there is to the world are loose and separate particulars; thus there are no laws. Simplicity, then, is not sufficient to support a humean view of what it is to be a law of nature.

2.5 Assembling the Broader Case for Immanent Concepts and Metaphysics

We can now assemble the pieces from this and the previous chapter into a helpful initial perspective on the philosophical support for Hegel's concept thesis, and for the project of a metaphysics of reason. More specifically, we can use the notion of explanation as a kind of window through which to view this philosophical support. We can use this vantage point to pull together, specifically: Hegel's critique of empiricism's pure indifference claim, at the beginning of the Encyclopedia; the dilemma concerning "Ground" in the middle of the WL; and the account of mechanism near the end. I will return at the end to

the respect in which is this is still only an initial view, rather than an account of the way in which Hegel himself aims to systematically reconstruct all of metaphysics.

We can begin with the concept thesis, asking: Have we neglected the simpler alternative that explanations are just ways of describing things that mesh with the subjective interests of an audience? No. Think of Hegel's rejection of pseudo-sciences like phrenology, or his point that discovery of the laws of nature has the salutary effect of undermining belief in superstitions like astrology. On his view, phrenology fails in its attempts to explain, even if it satisfies someone who believes in it, or wants to believe in it, or similar. The same applies to astrology. But,

- (i) Some things are explicable.

For example, our best account, in the case of the motions of the planets, will appeal to laws of nature. To make out this kind of distinction between appeals to those laws and phrenology, we need an account of explanation itself as more than merely subjective or contextual in the sense above:

- (ii) Successful explanation must be constrained by something that is objective, in the sense that it does not vary across individuals in the manner of subjective states like belief.

It is possible to attempt to account for the objective constraint on explanation without appeal to reason in the world, objective explanatory relevance, worldly dependence, and so on. Empiricist accounts are an example. But the attempt to do so meets difficulties. First of all, such accounts do not really banish reason in the world; they only restrict it to a favored case (§2.3). Second, such accounts, in trying to get rid of various forms of reason in the world, will not be able to get the directionality of reason correct, as in empiricism (§2.4), and as noted in positivism in the Introduction. So we should give up on those attempts, concluding that:

- (iii) Explanation is constrained by reason in the world.

We can turn, then, to the question of what form(s) this reason takes. In particular, we can turn back to chapter 1, and the task of ruling out the strongest attempts to account for reason in the world *without immanent concepts*. There we learned:

- (iv) The form of reason in the world constraining explanation cannot be provided by the view that, because there is always an underlying mechanism, immanent concepts are superfluous.

This is simply the regress argument discussed in §1.1: pure or conceptless mechanism ends up undercutting *itself* by denying there is any reason in the world. And then:

- (v) The form of reason in the world constraining explanation cannot be conceptless matter, as in fundamentalist mechanism.

This is the argument of §1.2: matter, conceived of as exhausted by non-relational features like shape, would not be any form of reason in the world at all. And:

- (vi) The form of reason in the world constraining explanation cannot be conceptless real grounds, as, for example, external forces or laws.

This is the argument of §1.3: Positing real grounds, like forces or laws supposed to act externally on things, makes no advance; it leaves us either still wanting to appeal to the universal nature, kind, or immanent concept of our external grounds, or else in a regress needing to posit ever more external grounds. And these last three steps examine, specifically in terms of mechanism, all of the rival positions on the regress of reasons. So we must eventually allow a primitive case of reason in the world, in the form of immanent concepts. Or:

- (vii) *The concept thesis*: the reasons that explain why things are as they are and do what they do are immanent “concepts,” akin to immanent universals or kinds.

We can also distinguish in terms of some of these steps the basic philosophical options when it comes specifically to the laws of nature. We can begin with the distinction between (a) formal grounds; (b) real grounds (both discussed in the “Doctrine of Essence”); and (c) Hegel’s own appeal to immanent concepts in virtue of which things do what they do (discussed in the “Doctrine of the Concept”). This provides three kinds of account of the laws of nature: (a) Those on which laws are just a general *form* of describing what happens. (b) Those on which laws are something *real external* to objects and their natures, governing from outside. (c) Those on which the statement of a law is a description of the immanent concepts or natures in virtue of which things do what they do. These distinctions capture well current debates about the laws of nature. There are (a) Contemporary “humean” or a regularity accounts of the laws of nature. (b) Those who reject humeanism recently have tended to hold instead that laws are a kind of relation of necessitation holding between universals. So if it is a law that all *Fs* are *Gs*, then this is to be understood along the lines of there being a distinctive relation of necessitation holding between

F-ness and *G*-ness. The law—the relation—is thus something *external* to or outside of *F*s and *G*s and their natures (e.g., Armstrong 1983). (c) And then there are those today who account for laws of nature in terms of powers or dispositions supposed to be immanent in kinds or their natures (e.g., Molnar 2003). Care is required here, because this last kind of account is sometimes described as a denial of existence of the laws of nature. Hegel describes his version, however, as the view that there are laws, but only laws that depend on the immanent concepts of things. If one instead takes the third route but preserves the humean conception of what a law would be, as a universal generalization, then it may indeed follow that there are no “laws” in that sense. For the powers inherent in the natures of things may interact in complex ways resisting capture in terms of universal generalizations.¹⁷

Finally, we can also gain the same kind of preliminary overall view of the case for the project of the metaphysics of reason. Epistemic criticisms of the project fail by appealing to a form of skepticism that, if carried through in a principled manner, would fail to privilege anything else over the metaphysics of reason. Attempts to charge the metaphysics of reason with reliance on incoherent notions also fail, because any real alternative will be drawing on similar notions, in terms of which the project of the metaphysics of reason can be reformulated. For example, humeanism draws on such a notion of reason. But perhaps we should go yet farther from Hegel’s view, to this position: explaining something requires only describing it in terms that satisfy some audience asking “why?” given their subjective states. However, this too is a view enlisting a notion of reason or dependence: whether or not an account counts as explanatory *depends* on the reaction of a given audience; the *reason* it is explanatory, if it is, is the reaction of the specific audience. Granted, such accounts can try to restrict this reason by allowing it to do its work only on the restricted domain of relations between states with intentional content and their statuses. But why would this be better? Here we meet the arguments considered above: one could argue that we can have no knowledge of reason on other domains, or in the world; and one could argue that the very idea of reason on other domains is an incoherent notion. These are just the charges against the metaphysics of

¹⁷ Hegel is sometimes compared to Cartwright on laws (e.g., Siep 2000, 95). There is something to this, but it is not that Hegel thinks statements of laws “lie,” as Cartwright famously says. For those sorts of claim preserve a humean conception law as universal generalization (e.g., Chalmers 1993, on Cartwright) and Hegel does not preserve this. If Cartwright’s talk of capacities is an account of laws as grounded in kinds and powers inherent in them, then this is certainly similar to Hegel. Compare Bowman’s (2013, Ch. 4) use of the comparison, in a reading on which Hegel is more skeptical of the lawful and lawful kinds; on my view, Hegel cedes that there is such a thing as strictly lawful kinds, and ultimately argues that this is so much the worse for the explanatory completeness and so metaphysical status of those kinds.

reason that, we have seen in this chapter, do not pan out. So Hegel has powerful support for his conclusion that it is best to engage in the metaphysics of reason knowingly, from the beginning, and to try to build the best metaphysics of reason that we can.

That said, there are two major reasons why all this remains only an initial approach to Hegel. First, nothing in this line of thought yet takes account of the threat posed by Kant's Transcendental Dialectic critique of metaphysics (Part II). Second, as a result, this line of thought falls short of the systematic way in which Hegel himself will try to reconstruct and defend metaphysics from the ground up, drawing (surprisingly) from Kant's critique (Part III).

Kant's Challenge and Hegel's Defense of Natural Teleology

The Concept as the Substance of Life

Hegel aims to distinguish teleological forms of reason in the world from lawful forms of reason and defend the reality and knowability of such teleology, including in the case of the biological.¹ As above, Hegel will defend his position on teleology by engaging with what he takes to be the most important challenge. The challenge is Kant's position, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: true, we can with much work at least make sense of the concept of something non-designed, or non-artifactual, being a teleological system by nature, on its own account; this is the concept of "inner purposiveness"; there are senses in which it is necessary for us to think in these terms, especially for the guidance of theoretical inquiry; but this concept of inner purposiveness is so demanding that we could never *know* anything to meet it—not even in the seemingly best case of living beings.

Hegel praises Kant's distinction between external purposiveness, as in artifact cases, and inner purposiveness. He sees this as a resuscitation of something, going back to Aristotle, which is crucial for philosophy generally. Hegel will frequently dismiss and ridicule the idea of nature itself as designed; he sees this as a distraction from the most important philosophical issues, and an invitation to superstitions or triviality, as in the suggestion that God "has provided cork-trees for bottle stoppers."² But this brings us to the nub of disagreement: Hegel opposes Kant's skeptical conclusion, arguing that we can know living beings to manifest true "internal purposiveness." And I will argue that

¹ I borrow here parts of Kreines (2013) and build on results from Kreines (2008b) and (2005).

² EN §245Z, 9:14/6, which borrows from Goethe's and Schiller's *Xenia*. On "superstition" and external purposiveness, see VGP 20:88/3:186.

neither Kant's skeptical argument, nor Hegel's rejoinder, have been rendered obsolete by subsequent progress in the sciences.

This philosophical exchange is also crucial for the overall goal of the book, for several reasons. First, Kant's argument here will parallel in many ways his broader critique of metaphysics. And Hegel's response here will parallel his broader response in defense of his metaphysics of reason. Second, this topic allows us to see how the commitments discussed above complicate matters going forward. For example, if Hegel did not reject humean indifferentism and defend the metaphysics of reason, then it would be simple to defend teleology, in this way: an explanation (one could then say) is just an appeal to a pattern in events, like a regularity; teleology is just a different sort of pattern, which we observe in cases of living beings; so clearly we can know from observation that these are teleological systems. But neither Kant nor Hegel will take such a deflationary approach, and on excellent grounds. They recognize that the issues here concern neither just patterns nor representations of patterns, but *reasons* for patterns—whether there is a distinct kind of reason in the world, and, in virtue of this, different beings. Third, this exchange can help us to see why Hegel himself acknowledges arguments that prevent the simple positing of *sui generis* or primitive teleology anywhere one wishes. It prevents, for example, positing *sui generis* teleology in matter, or in a single whole of all reality.

3.1 Natural Teleology and the Structure of Philosophical Debates

To see why the teleology issues at stake between Kant and Hegel have not been resolved or rendered obsolete by scientific progress, we need to consider the way in which philosophical debates concerning explanatory issues tend toward a common structure. The debate concerning causality, noted in §2.3, is a good example. The sciences seek knowledge of what is and what is not the cause of what. But a crucial philosophical issue is: *What is causality?* Empiricists hold that causality is just regularity or constant conjunction. Their opponents hold that causality is something *more*, something because of which there is constant conjunction; some might hold more specifically that causality is a form of uneducable necessary connection, for example. We can locate these positions relative to one another by describing the latter as “inflationary,” insofar as it takes causality to require more, and the former as relatively “deflationary.”

But it is important to note and avoid a potential mistake here. Deflationists about causality tend to argue on grounds of epistemological considerations, descendant from Hume's denial of the possibility of knowledge of necessary

connections. But in themselves such epistemological arguments place no direct pressure on inflationism itself at all. An inflationist who understands causality in terms of necessary connections, for example, is free to accept the claim that we cannot have knowledge of necessary connections; she would simply need to accept that we cannot have knowledge of causality.

To guard against such neglected alternatives requires recognition that the debate addresses two orthogonal issues, along two different dimensions. The first concerns the *what it is* issue. In this case: *What is causality?* And here we can distinguish between relatively more “inflationary” and “deflationary” answers, along a horizontal axis. But there is also a vertical issue, which in this case is epistemological: *Can we have knowledge of causality?* We could call the affirmative answer a form of “optimism,” and the negative answer a form of “pessimism.” The resulting space of debate is set out in table 3.1.

This structure is meant to leave room for more complexity if needed, including intermediate positions along both axes. And there could also be deflationary pessimism, although I know of no actual examples of this; in practice optimism seems so central to the point of deflationism.

Debates concerning freedom of the will tend to be analogous. On the horizontal axis we have the question: *What is free will?* Compatibilism, for example, is a relatively deflationary view. Incompatibilism is inflationary insofar as it takes free will to require something more, such as the addition of an uncaused cause. In these debates the most important vertical axis tends to concern not

Table 3.1 The Structure of Debate about Causality

		<i>What is causality?</i>	
		← <i>Inflationary</i>	<i>Deflationary</i> →
Can we have knowledge of causality?	Optimism (Yes) ↑	(A) Optimistic inflationism, e.g., causality is necessary connection, and we can have knowledge of it.	(B) Optimistic deflationism, e.g., causality is constant conjunction, and we can have knowledge of it.
	Pessimism (No) ↓	(C) Pessimistic inflationism, e.g., causality is necessary connection, and we cannot have knowledge of it.	

knowledge but existence; the question tends to be: *Is there any free will?* Or, in terms of our more narrow interest: *Do we have free will?* Optimists hold that we do have free will. Pessimists, as, for example, in the case of hard determinists, deny that we do.

Some may be skeptical about all such philosophical debates, arguing that “*what is X?*” questions can be meaningful only as mundane questions about the role played by a term, like “free will,” within one or another of many possible linguistic systems. Were there space here, I would reply along the following lines: The challenge turns on a metaphilosophy according to which we should hold at a distance debates about “*what is X?*” and look at them through the clarifying lens of a more basic theory of meaning. My response is simply a version of Hegel’s rejoinder about learning to swim before jumping in the water. Philosophy cannot escape such “*what is X?*” questions. More specifically, to reject such questions on grounds of a theory of meaning is to assume a privileged answer to the question: *what is meaning?* So I think it best to engage the full range of such questions and consider arguments addressing them.

In any case, Kant and Hegel will be addressing such debates, and so what is important here is to draw lessons about their structure. The main lesson is that potential errors stem from neglecting alternatives made possible by the bi-dimensional structure. In most cases, what is most easily neglected is the alternative of *pessimistic* forms of inflationism. The common mistake here would be to assume that inflationism itself has either epistemological disadvantages, or a disadvantage of metaphysical extravagance or lack of simplicity. An inflationary account of *X* can always be combined with a pessimistic view, as epistemologically modest as you like, that we cannot have knowledge of whether there are any *Xs*. Alternatively, an inflationism about *X* can always be combined with a metaphysics that is as simple as you like by pessimistically denying that there are any *Xs*.

This is not to say that an inflationist can just *assert* inflationism; she must argue. For example, an incompatibilist cannot just *say* that free will is incompatible with determinism. In general, the inflationist’s burden is to *demonstrate* that (i) there is some widely agreed feature of *X*, which (ii) requires her inflationary account.

Sometimes errors can spring from neglecting *deflationary* possibilities; this is particularly true in assessing the impact of results from the natural sciences. For example, contemporary experimental psychologists sometimes claim to have shown that we do not have free will. But they tend to assume inflationary views about what free will would have to be, namely, that it would have to involve a cause that is uncaused, immediately conscious, immaterial, and so on. The more inflationary the demands, the easier to prove that they are not met.

Still, the denial of free will is unsupported without philosophical argument for inflationism.

In general, in debates with this structure, even if they address topics also of concern in the sciences, scientific progress will not necessarily resolve matters or render old arguments obsolete. Compared to scientists today, for example, Hume is incredibly ignorant about physics; and yet Hume formulates a regularity account of causality that remains of great importance. Given any inflationary account of *X* in terms of some requirements *A*, *B*, and *C*, scientific results might well show that there is nothing that meets those requirements. But there is no obvious or widely agreed way in which scientific results might in themselves have entirely resolved or rendered obsolete the question of what would have to be the case for there to be free will. Nor for there to be causality. Nor, as we will see, for there to be natural teleology.

3.2 Kant's Analysis and Teleology's Explanatory Implications: Why Teleology Is Not a Structure, Pattern, or Complexity

Kant's discussion of teleology and life in the third *Critique* focuses on the concept of a *Naturzweck*. I have previously tried to deal with the whole of this account (Kreines 2005); here I will focus especially on Kant's skepticism about knowledge, because this is what Hegel most directly contests. More specifically, Kant denies that we can know whether there are any *Naturzwecke*. That concept is "problematic," so that when employing it "one does not know whether one is judging about something or nothing" (KU 5:397).³ Or we can put the point in terms of explanation: a *Naturzweck* would be something natural *explicable in teleological terms*, and yet Kant repeatedly denies that we can ever legitimately claim knowledge that anything natural can be explained in teleological terms.⁴ So teleological judgment must have a limited status, as heuristic (KU 5:411; EE 20:205), and subjective (KU 5:391; 5:400) as opposed to objective (KU 5:388; 5:401).

Whether implicitly or explicitly, interpreters often take *Naturzweck* to be Kant's "expression for biological organisms."⁵ And they often seek to

³ Also EE 20:234 and KU 5:396.

⁴ For example: "positing ends of nature in its products ... provides no information at all about the origination and the inner possibility of these forms" (KU 5:417). And: "teleological judging is rightly drawn into our research into nature ... without presuming thereby to *explain* it" (5:360; emphasis in original). See also KU 5:411.

⁵ Zumbach (1984, 19). See also MacFarland (1970, 102); deVries (1991, 53); Zanetti (1993, 348); Ginsborg (2005, §3.3). Contrast McLaughlin (1990, esp. 46–47).

understand the concept of a *Naturzweck* in terms of the features of living beings discussed by Kant: mutually compensating parts, nutrition, and reproduction (KU 5:371f.). This approach can seem to charitably attribute to Kant a kind of deflationism: a *Naturzweck* is just an organism, or just a system with the features we observe in organisms. But any first step or assumption along these lines will in fact doom Kant's account. Kant's skepticism, or pessimism about knowledge, is obviously confused if *Naturzweck* is just Kant's expression for biological organisms, or for systems having the above three features. For we obviously can know, from experience, that there are biological organisms, that they reproduce, and so on.

To correct the original misstep, we need only recall the structure of free will debates. We cannot understand the issue at stake between compatibilists and incompatibilists if we mistake it for an issue concerning *our actual capacities*. The issue is orthogonal to the question of whether we have free will. And Kant's discussion of teleology and life similarly engages two orthogonal issues. The horizontal issue is: What is a *Naturzweck* (natural end or purpose)? Or, roughly, what would it take for there to be natural teleology, or something natural and genuinely explicable in teleological terms? The vertical issue is epistemic: Can we know whether there are any *Naturzwecke*?

As we have just seen, Kant's answer to the question of the knowledge of *Naturzwecke* is "no." But his overall view is subtle: Actual living beings do have certain features—nutrition, reproduction, etc.—that inevitably lead us to think of them as *Naturzwecke*. Teleological judgment of them turns out necessary for us and plays an irreplaceable role in guiding our scientific inquiry seeking non-teleological explanations.

But the denial of knowledge is crucial. It means that Kant cannot be a deflationist. Kant is an inflationary pessimist about knowledge of *Naturzwecke*. He is arguing that the concept of a natural teleological system includes requirements demanding enough that we can never know whether anything meets them. Only the inflationism provides grounds for denying knowledge. Again, there is no threat of metaphysical extravagance here. His view is that we must not assert or deny in any theoretical context, whether scientific or philosophical, that there are any *Naturzwecke*.⁶

But while Kant's inflationism is not vulnerable to that worry, he still must argue for it. Kant's strategy is to argue (i) that all must agree that the notion of natural teleology carries explanatory implications; and (ii) further inflationary consequences follow from those explanatory implications.

⁶ This saves room for defense of other positive epistemic attitudes toward natural teleology, in order for it to play its guiding role. For more on Kant on knowledge, see chapter 4.

Kant's initial analysis of the concept of a natural purpose, or (i), consists in two requirements on the relation of part to whole within a complex system. The first is a requirement for anything to be a teleological system or *Zweck*, which would include also artifacts produced by external design. The second requirement narrows the analysis to *Naturzwecke*, or systems that are teleological by nature rather than external design.

What is crucial about the first requirement is the explanatory demand it imposes. Kant considers an example: there are features of the Arctic that benefit human survival there, including sea creatures that provide nourishment. The benefit is certainly real, and we can know that it exists. With respect to the whole system, it has a complex structure, in which parts are mutually beneficial. But this does not justify any teleological conclusions. It does not justify the conclusion that any features of the ecosystem are there *for the sake of* human consumption, or have the *teleological purpose* of nourishing humans. To draw the conclusion on these grounds would be "bold and arbitrary . . . presumptuous and ill-considered"; "relative purposiveness . . . justifies no absolute teleological judgments" (KU 5:368–69).⁷

We can also look at this point in terms of the connection between teleology and normativity: "[a] teleological judgment compares the concept of a product of nature as it is with one of what it *ought to be*" (EE 20:240).⁸ Imagine that there are nutritious fish benefiting humans in the Arctic. To judge the Arctic ecosystem in teleological terms would be to judge that, should the fish later thrive by learning to avoid human capture, they would be malfunctioning, or failing to fulfill their purpose. But clearly the fact of current benefit does not alone justify such teleological and normative conclusions. For, as Kant says, "one does not see why human beings have to live there at all" (KU 5:369).

The crucial philosophical question here is: what is it about teleological judgment that leaves it unjustified by benefit? And Kant has a clear and powerful answer: for a teleological system, it is not enough that the parts *benefit* other parts or the whole, or might exhibit a certain pattern or complexity; the parts must be present in their arrangement *because* of ways in which they benefit the whole—the benefit must be the reason for the arrangement. More specifically, Kant's analysis is couched in terms of relations between parts and whole in a complex system. The parts of a complex system will have certain features, which will have consequences for the whole. For example, the fish are part of

⁷ It is crucial that Kant is not arguing that these cases of benefit are not teleological systems. Kant's point here concerns the inadequacy of benefit as a justification for that conclusion. See especially McLaughlin (1990, 43). This leaves space to argue that we must think of even such cases in teleological terms, but lack knowledge.

⁸ Following Ginsborg (2001).

the Arctic system and have the consequence for the whole of making it more hospitable for humans. But this is no justification for concluding that the presence of the fish is *explained* by this relation to humans, so that they are there *in order to* provide food. In these terms, we can explain the first requirement (R1), or what I will call the “explanatory demand”:

R1: In a teleological system, parts of a specific sort must be present because of their consequences for the whole.

I mean the “because” here, and in general, to refer to any form of objective explanatory relevance, not specifically to efficient causality.⁹ To see the meaning of R1, note how it is satisfied by a pocket watch: A gear in a watch has features with consequences for the whole, in that it contributes to making the whole a reliable indicator of the time. But its benefit, in that respect, is not alone justification for teleological judgment. It is crucial that we can know that a gear with these features is present *because* of those consequences given resolutions with other parts: “[i]n a watch . . . one part is certainly present for the sake of the other” (KU 5:374).

We can now understand Kant’s own formulation of R1:

for a thing as a *Naturzweck* it is requisite, *first*, that its parts (as far as their existence and their form are concerned) are possible only through their relation to the whole. (KU 5:373)

The “existence and form” of the parts is what must have a special explanation in a teleological system. And “possible only through” is the phrase that demands the reason, because, or explanation.¹⁰ For example, a gear with the specific *form*—e.g., a certain number of teeth—*exists* in the watch *only* because of its “relation to the whole,” which is in this case its contribution to the whole’s reliably indicating the time.

Now some may wish to read Kant as making a more deflationary claim. But Kant’s own discussion of mere benefit, as in the Arctic case, shows why any deflation of the explanatory demand will fail to capture teleology. For example, some see Kant as taking a teleological system to require only that the parts

⁹ See Kant’s stress here on *darum* and *weil* (KU 5:369). And compare Wright’s (1976, 24) “etiologial” analysis of teleology.

¹⁰ Kant uses the term “possibility” to refer to the issue of how a system originated: he speaks of “the real ground” of the “possibility” of a *Zweck* (KU 5:220), and he denies we can completely rule out a “ground of the possibility” or “generation” of living beings in “mere mechanism” (KU 5:400). But the very concept of a *Zweck* implies “that a thing is possible only as a *Zweck*, i.e. that the causality of its origin must be sought not in the mechanism of nature” (KU 5:369).

appear to be present because of their consequences for the whole.¹¹ But the fish might well *appear* to us to be present for our benefit; and yet the teleological inference that fish are *for the sake of* human consumption would remain presumptuous. Kant's considerations provide an argument, generalized from this kind of case, that would defeat any more deflationary alternative to R1:

- (i) For any deflationary alternative to R1/the explanatory demand, there would be examples that satisfy the deflationary analysis, but leave teleology unjustified.
- (ii) Thus, any analysis of a concept of a genuinely teleological system must include R1/the explanatory demand.

Having explained the first requirement, I turn to the second. To complete the analysis of a *Naturzweck*, Kant seeks a requirement to rule out cases of teleological systems that are created by external designers, leaving only teleological systems by nature—a requirement that will distinguish such “inner purposiveness” from the “external purposiveness” of artifacts. The idea here is that the parts of artifacts are means to an end only insofar as an external designer *imposed* some overall structure or organization; they are organized. A *Naturzweck*, by contrast, would have to be “self-organizing” (KU 5:374). Stated in terms of part-whole relations, the second requirement must demand that the structure or organization of the whole is determined not by something external to the system but rather internally, and so by the parts of the system itself. But for a part to contribute to the determination of the structure would be to contribute toward determining what other kinds of parts are present and in what arrangement. So:

R2: In a natural teleological system the existence and forms of the parts must be as they are because of other parts.

Or, for a *Naturzweck*, it is required, “*second*, that its parts be combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form” (KU 5:373).

3.3 The Force of Kant's Argument for Inflationary Denial of Knowledge of Natural Teleology

How does this analysis support the further inflationism, which will render knowledge impossible for us? The key argument connects the concept of

¹¹ MacFarland: “systems whose parts are so intimately inter-related that they appear to depend on a plan of what the whole was to be like” (1970, 104). Zumbach (1984, 129).

any *Zweck* with a prior determining representation of a concept of the whole system. This argument is complicated by Kant's epistemic modesty, holding that our cognition is restricted or limited to knowledge of a spatio-temporal empirical world. So insofar as this particular argument turns on appeal to temporal order, its results are limited to things we can know about. The basic idea is that the complex systems we know are produced in time. We can know the *because* of such a temporal production only in the sense of knowing causes. But the temporally later consequences of the presence of the parts cannot itself cause the temporally prior production of that very system, except in the sense that a *representation* of those consequences can be the cause of the production. Thus Kant emphasizes that we cannot know a later effect to cause its own cause:

The causal nexus, insofar as it is conceived merely by the understanding . . . is always descending; and the things themselves, which as effects presuppose others as their causes, cannot conversely be the causes of these at the same time. (KU 5:372)

In the order of "real causes," an end or purpose (*Zweck*) cannot precede and thereby influence its own causes, so it can do so only as "ideal," or as first represented (KU 5:372).¹² We can call this step:

Representation required: In any knowable teleological system, the parts must be present and have their features because of an originating representation of a concept of the whole.

And so the very next sentence after Kant's statement of R1 infers the need for an originating concept that determines the whole:

For the thing itself is an end, and is thus comprehended under a concept or an idea that must determine *a priori* everything that is to be contained in it. (KU 5:373)

It is a mistake to worry, with MacFarland (1970, 106), that Kant's point here is scientifically outdated. Kant is not claiming that actual organisms originate in representations. This argument of Kant's is not concerned directly with organisms. It is an inflationary argument concerning the analysis of teleology; he is arguing that teleology is so demanding that we can never have

¹² See also MacFarland (1970, 106); Guyer (2001, 265); Zuckert (2007).

the knowledge necessary to explain organisms or anything non-designed in teleological terms.

More specifically, Kant argues as follows: If the purposiveness of a system is to be *inner*, or if it is to meet the second requirement, the parts themselves would have to determine the structure of the whole. In a spatio-temporal empirical world, this would mean parts guided by a *representation* of the whole. But the parts of the real complex systems of which we have empirical knowledge, such as living beings, are ultimately material. And matter cannot represent concepts or intend to act in accordance: “no intention in the strict sense of the term can be attributed to any lifeless matter” (KU 5:383). So Kant’s two requirements, *applied to an exhaustively material system*, would be incompatible: any reason in favor of thinking that the structure of an exclusively material whole is due to its own parts would also be a reason to deny that the whole is determined by a representation, and so to deny that it is an organized being or a teleological system at all. So:

if we consider a material whole, as far as its form is concerned, as a product of the parts and of their forces and their capacity to combine by themselves . . . we represent a mechanical kind of generation. But from this there arises no concept of a whole as a *Zweck*. (KU 5:408)

Kant is an incompatibilist about this topic, at least when it comes to anything of which we can have knowledge.¹³ And the reason for this is that the analysis of a *Zweck* in general requires, with R1, a particular kind of “generation,” as the previous passage puts it: a generation not compatible with an exhaustively material mechanism. Thus, Kant’s equation here: “that a thing is possible only as a *Zweck*, i.e., that the causality of its origin must be sought not in the mechanism of nature” (KU 5:369).

And yet it is crucial that Kant is arguing that we must not let the limitations of our form of cognition obscure from us the bare or minimal *logical possibility* of a *Naturzweck*—the concept of which could then be coherent enough to guide us. He is, in a sense, holding out the merely logical possibility of a kind of compatibilism that must remain knowable and comprehensible only for “another (higher) understanding than the human one” (KU 5:406). What

¹³ So if actual organisms, in the sense that we can have knowledge of these, are *Naturzwecke* or natural “organized beings,” then they cannot be explained in mechanistic terms. For example, “if I assume” that a maggot “is a *Naturzweck*, I cannot count on a mechanical mode of generation for it” (KU 5:411). Mechanism must “always be inadequate for things that we once acknowledge as *Naturzwecke*” (KU 5:415). But we do not know whether anything is a *Naturzweck*, so we “do not know how far the mechanical mode of explanation that is possible for us will extend” (KU 5:415).

would be required would be an intellect capable of grasping the very nature of all matter and also jumping beyond this to knowledge of, as Kant says, the “thing in itself (which is not an appearance) as substratum,” a “supersensible real ground of nature” (KU 5:409). Such an intellect might comprehend and have knowledge of real *Naturzwecke*, but we can only defend the logical possibility here without comprehension or knowledge.

I can see two ways to try to think in the direction of this merely logical possibility. One way would be to note that supersensible stuff underlying matter might be (unlike matter itself) capable of representing the concept of a whole and organizing itself in accordance with that concept; the result would be the self-organization of a *Naturzweck* in accordance with a represented concept. The second way is to note that the need for the determining representation follows only for anything that could be the object of our merely discursive understanding, or anything that could be known or comprehended by us, and particularly anything in time. A fundamentally non-spatio-temporal supersensible substrate might—for all we can know or comprehend—explain its own existence out of a kind of self-organization transcending time, without need of representations of concepts at all. If so, then it is at least logically possible to think of one and the same system as both an appearance determined by mechanical laws of matter, and yet also to know these laws and this matter as resting on a supersensible ground that makes the system also teleological. In such a case, there would be two ways of considering such a system:

that which is necessary in it as object of the senses can be considered in accordance with mechanical laws, while the agreement and unity of the particular laws and corresponding forms . . . can at the same time be considered in it, as object of reason (indeed the whole of nature as a system) in accordance with teleological laws. (KU 5:409)

Care is required with some complexities here concerning Kant’s different discussions of many features of a higher or divine form of intellect. For instance, I do not think that his argument here demonstrates that knowledge of a *Naturzweck* would require an intellect that is itself the cause of the world, although Kant sometimes attributes this feature to higher forms of intellect. But Kant’s argument singles out what is important here: unless the argument can be countered with a competing account of the origin of a *Naturzweck*, it will follow that knowledge requires grasping all at once the nature of all matter while also leaping beyond this to a non-spatio-temporal supersensible ground of all nature. This would have to involve an *immediate* grasp of the nature of reality, in two related senses. First, it would require a freedom from the limitation of our need to receive intuitive content from sensibility, mediated by

the forms of space and time. Second, this would mean that it could proceed directly to and beyond the whole of everything, without having to build step-wise through anything like synthesis of intuition. These senses of immediacy are the features that will be important throughout this study. So I will mean these features specifically when I refer to Kant's discussions of a "divine" or "higher intellect." There will be neither space nor need to wade into questions about relations between all of the features Kant discusses, or his more detailed terminology;¹⁴ I will argue that focus on these senses of immediacy is sufficient for understanding the strength of Kant's arguments and of Hegel's responses.

So while there is a slight sense in which the open logical possibility mitigates Kant's incompatibilism, *it in no way mitigates his extreme inflationism*. He concludes with what I call:

Full inflationism: for any *Naturzweck*, either matter or a substrate of it must be active and intelligent, or there must be a supersensible ground of all nature in virtue of which things can self-organize of their own nature in a manner that somehow transcends time.

This is so demanding that nothing we could ever know could ever meet it. The point is to deny knowledge and not to argue here for any conclusions about such a supersensible substrate or the existence of a higher intellect.

Precisely something unknowable yet logically possible is what is needed for Kant to argue that the concept of a *Naturzweck* is useful for reasons divorced from knowability. To begin with, this leaves room for Kant to claim that living beings are such that we will think of them or judge them as self-organizing *Naturzwecke*, even though we cannot have knowledge of this. We do so because their features appear contingent relative to the laws

¹⁴ Contrast Förster's (2002, 179; 2012, 152) case for the importance of a distinction between Kant's "intellectual intuition" and "intuitive understanding" and different ways of understanding each of these two different Kantian notions. But these distinctions are supposed to be important because they are supposed to make possible a specific counterargument to Kant, by Goethe and Hegel, addressing a problem about the *constant development* of an organism, requiring a form of thought that is more flexible than Kant allows (2002, 183), so that Goethe might see his studies of plants as proving the reality of such flexible thought, and so an intuitive intellect (if not intellectual intuition), and so a rejoinder to Kant's more skeptical view. On my account, this is beside the point when it comes to Kant's argument about natural teleology. For Kant's problem does not concern flexible development, but rather the *origin* or *production* of a *Naturzweck*. Absent a rival account of *that*, all these distinctions leave Kant still in possession of a strong case that knowledge of *Naturzwecke* would require knowledge of a *supersensible ground of nature*, and so an *immediate* intellect in the senses I note. The complexities about Kant's different notions of a higher intellect do not themselves sidestep that problem, and are not needed for Hegel's response. On those complexities, see also Gram (1981).

of nature (KU 5:360), and they have mutually compensating parts, incorporate matter in order to grow, and generate new living beings by reproduction (KU 5:371f.). Second, Kant can then argue that thinking of living beings in such teleological terms provides us with an indispensable heuristic aid in scientific inquiry seeking non-teleological explanations.¹⁵ In fact Kant will argue that we require guidance by thinking even of *nature as a whole* in teleological terms in seeking natural laws in terms of which to provide mechanistic explanations.¹⁶

Kant also says much more about this special status accorded teleological judgment: it is subjective rather than objective, *as if*, heuristic, reflective as opposed to determinative, and so on. For our purposes it is only important that these points not be mistaken for a deflation of the content of teleological judgment; they concern the vertical issues about the status of such judgment. Kant must remain an inflationist about the content in order to support his consistent denial of theoretical knowledge.

I have argued elsewhere (Kreines 2005) that Kant's view is a kind of neglected alternative in philosophy of science debates today, between neo- and anti-teleologists. Here I will just note that neither side typically deflates the explanatory demand that drives Kant's argument. Contemporary neo-teleologists argue that the explanatory demand can be met by natural selection, making room for teleology in biology without design. Anti-teleologists argue that it can only be met by design, leaving no such room. I discuss both views in §3.7.

It is sometimes objected that the Kantian argument above rests on an assumption that teleology could only be shown to be legitimate by in fact reducing it to efficient causal terms; but (it is objected) appeal to teleology is just a different form of explanation as compared to efficient causal accounts, without any need of one being legitimated by the other.¹⁷

This is a mistake, however. All that Kant's argument requires is objective explanatory relevance. Kant's formulation of R1 does not specifically require causality (KU 5:373). And Kant clearly allows for the logical possibility that the analysis could be satisfied by something different than efficient causality, in part because it would be non-temporal: by a "supersensible real ground of nature" (KU 5:409). And such an open-minded stance is all that is needed

¹⁵ The famous claim that there cannot be a Newton for a blade of grass leaves open the possibility that organisms really originate in "mere mechanism" (KU 5:400), and also limitations of what it is possible for "humans" to "grasp."

¹⁶ See KU 5:383; 5:410; EE 20:218; MacFarland (1970, 89–90); McLaughlin (1990, 156–57); and Guyer (2001, 266).

¹⁷ E.g., deVries says that Kant's worry stems from a model that "reduces final causation to the form of efficient causation" (1991, 56).

to support Kant's skeptical conclusion. For a temporal system, like the living beings of which we have any knowledge, to meet the requirement for a teleological system (R1), the temporally earlier process of production or formation of the system must occur as it does *because* of the temporally later consequences of the presence of the parts for the whole. And we do not know about any form of such a *because* operating *backwards* in time, in the case of living beings. So the objection is no barrier to Kant's argument for the conclusion that we do not know living beings as teleological systems.¹⁸

Finally, some might object that Kant unjustifiably assumes that teleology cannot be brute or *sui generis*. But the Kantian can ask whether, by "brute teleology," something is meant that would be justified by the existence of benefit? If the answer is affirmative, then this is not truly teleology, given Kant's argument by appeal to cases like the Arctic. If negative, then the Kantian can press this further question: What then is it about teleology that makes it require more for justification? Refusal to answer seems to leave unclear what is meant by "brute teleology." With anything short of R1 as an answer, Kant has shown a failure to capture teleology. And R1 is sufficient for his skeptical argument.

3.4 Approaching Hegel's Argument Strategy: Neither Purely Inflationary nor Deflationary

Hegel draws on Kant's analysis to defend natural teleology against Kant's account: Hegel argues for an understanding of natural teleology that would make it obvious that, because we can know that living beings do manifest true "internal purposiveness," we can know that their structure and development is explicable in teleological terms. So Hegel is an optimist in contrast to Kant's pessimism about the knowledge and limitation of the status of natural teleology: teleology or purposiveness "is the truth that exists in and for itself and judges *objectively*" (WL 6:444/655–56). What is most remarkable here is that Hegel will establish ambitious metaphysical conclusions, but without drawing on mere metaphysical assumptions that beg the question; he rather argues from commitments internal to Kant's own challenge. Further, if Hegel's argument against Kant works, then it would also follow from this that later scientific progress in biology, concerning natural selection, is irrelevant to the question of natural teleology; so there can be no question of Hegel's response to Kant contradicting those scientific results.

¹⁸ Granted, the issue of knowledge *in principle* would be more complex.

To note possible openings for rejoinders to Kant, consider the structure of Kant's argument:

- (i) R1/the explanatory demand.
- (ii) Representation required (we can know something as a *Zweck* only by knowing it as the product of a represented concept).
- (iii) Full inflationism: for any *Naturzweck*, either matter or a substrate of it must be active and intelligent, or there must be a supersensible ground of all nature that self-organizes in a manner somehow transcending time.
- (iv) Skepticism or epistemic pessimism: we cannot know whether there are any *Naturzwecke*.

In thinking about Hegel, there are two possibilities that are easiest to understand.

First, it is easy to understand what a purely inflationary form of optimism would be like as a response to Kant. The idea would be to accept all of the inflationism from (i) through (iii) but then assert precisely the knowledge denied by Kant in the pessimistic (iv). What would make this so optimistic would be the claim that we ourselves can break through a barrier to a superior in kind epistemic perspective, supposedly enabling knowledge of either: (a) an otherwise unknowable hidden intelligence in matter, in contradiction to all normally available evidence; or (b) knowledge of a supersensible substrate of all nature organizing itself from within in a manner that somehow transcends time. I will argue that Hegel does not give this purely inflationary response. For now, it is at least easy to see that he does not hold any kind of inflationism that would take teleology to demand intelligent representation of any kind. Indeed, he says that "Kant re-awakened" what was already "Aristotle's determination" of "inner purposiveness," or teleology without an origin in consciousness or "representation" (EL §204R). Granted, there is a sense in which Hegel is arguing for the possibility of going beyond knowledge of purely spatio-temporal particulars, but he is definitely not defending knowledge of natural teleology supposed to involve grasping any supersensible substrate of matter, nor the immediate grasp of reality all at once that would have been required for such.

Second, it is also easy to understand what a purely deflationary optimism would look like in response to Kant: it would reject every step of the above, including R1/the explanatory demand, arguing that teleological judgment of a system need carry no implications about the origin, production, or genesis of that system.¹⁹ I argued above that Kant's own reasoning defeats such

¹⁹ Again I think that deVries (1991) is the best account moving farthest in this direction.

deflationary rejoinders. And I will argue that Hegel is no deflationist in this sense. For example, he does not endorse anything like the deflationary view that a compatibility of teleology and mechanism follows easily from the simple fact that we have distinct practices of accounting for things by representing them in two distinct ways or forms; Hegel rejects the idea that an “equal validity of the two rests only on the fact that they *are*, that is to say, that we *have them both*” (WL 6:437/651). Hegel does not reject the problem raised by R1, about the origin of a system, as confused; he seeks to resolve it.

But aside from these two immediately apparent approaches, appreciation of the structure of Kant's argument opens room for another, which is neither purely inflationary nor purely deflationary: one could accept *R1/the explanatory demand*, but then also argue that none of Kant's further inflationary steps, neither *representation required* nor *full inflationism*, really follow. One could argue that R1 could be satisfied by meeting very different sorts of inflationary requirements, having nothing to do with representations, intelligent design, or a supersensible substrate of matter. I will argue that this partly inflationary and partly deflationary strategy is Hegel's. It will also prefigure Hegel's broader response to Kant's general critique of metaphysics; but, for now, I focus on natural teleology.

3.5 How Hegel's Analysis of Life Resolves Kant's Problem: The Intimacy of Biological Type and Token

The overly quick way of telling the story of Hegel's rejoinder is this: living beings are natural teleological systems specifically insofar as their immanent “concept” or *Begriff* is so intimately related to them as to be “the substance of life” (WL 6:472/678). But the burden here is on Hegel to explain what this means, why it matters to teleology, and how we know this is so.

Hegel seeks to discharge this burden in the “Life” chapter of the *Logic* by constructing a concept of *life* out of three requirements. This is not an attempt to give an a priori logical deduction of the features real living beings must have.²⁰ Nor is this best understood as an attempt to reflect on our conceptual scheme or language or the definition of the word “life.” The analysis should be understood as a theoretical tool, or in terms of what Hegel seeks to do with it. And what he seeks to do is to address issues in the metaphysics of reason, concerning the why or because of things. In particular, he is arguing that, for anything satisfying the three requirements of his concept of *life*, we can know

²⁰ It is “quite improper” to try to “deduce” the “contingent products of nature” (EN §250R).

that its substance would be its immanent concept, and consequently that it would be a natural teleological system, or satisfy Kant's analysis of the concept of a *Naturzweck*. Hegel's three-part analysis of *life* structures the "Life" section in the WL and EL, and also structures discussions of biology in the *Philosophy of Nature* and elsewhere. In the WL the three parts correspond to subsections titled: "A. The Living Individual," "B. The Life Process," and "C. Kind [*Gattung*]." The quickest way to explain the point here is to say that the three requirements demand something that is (i) organized to preserve itself through the activities of (ii) necessary assimilation and (iii) reproduction.

More specifically: *First*, the parts must be arranged in a way that benefits the whole. And since the whole is made of the parts, Hegel follows Kant in taking this to require that the parts are "reciprocally" (EL §218) beneficial.²¹ *Second*, Hegel's concept of life also demands that a complex system itself can be so benefited in part because it needs something from the outside environment in order to preserve itself. Thus, the WL refers to "assimilation" (WL 6:483/686). Or, for the living being, there must be an "otherness confronting it," and "[i]ts impulse is the need to sublimate this otherness" (WL 6:483/686). It "*preserves, develops, and objectifies itself in this process*" (EL §219). *Third*, Hegel's concept of life also requires mortal individuals reproducing within a species—it requires what Hegel calls the *Gattungsprozess* (WL 6:486).²² So anything satisfying Hegel's concept must also be organized in a manner that allows self-preservation, not only in the sense of the assimilation that preserves the individual but also in the sense of the reproduction that preserves the species, kind, or *Gattung*.²³

Of course, Kant knows about assimilation and reproduction, and cites them as reasons that our experience *suggests* that actual organisms are *Naturzwecke*, without allowing knowledge that the analysis of teleology is satisfied. Hegel seeks to prove that a system satisfying his concept of life (with those features) would also bring something else to bear, overlooked by Kant, and satisfy Kant's analysis of a *Naturzweck*—it would be a teleological system by nature. It would be such that "all members are reciprocally momentary *means* as much

²¹ Part of the point of Hegel's initial formulations is also to state (in a so-far inadequate because merely "immediate" manner) the desired conclusion: the parts are teleological "means" to an immanent end.

²² Hegel takes this to include mortality; see EL §221; WL 6:486/774.

²³ Hegel's term *Gattung*—often translated as "genus"—can seem to suggest that there must be a perfectly rational hierarchical classification system. But Hegel's analysis does not require that claim, and he elsewhere denies it: Biology does *not* allow "an independent, rational system of organization" (EN §370). We should understand *Gattung* in terms of what Hegel is talking about here, and that is reproduction; so I will use "species" and "kind" (to emphasize the relationship to the lawful natural kinds or *Gattungen* discussed above).

as momentary purposes" (EL §216). Or, it would satisfy the claim that "the living thing is articulated purposefully; all its members serve only as means to the one end of self-preservation" (VPA 13:193/1:145).²⁴

We can take a first step toward understanding what this analysis should have to do with teleology by noting some similarities Hegel sees with Aristotle, and eventually working our way toward Hegel's own unusual terminology. (I leave out of consideration whether or not Hegel understands Aristotle correctly.) Hegel sees in Aristotle, first, the claim that life has the immanent end of specifically self-preservation.²⁵ Second, as noted above, Hegel sees in Aristotle the denial that teleology requires intelligent representation of an end (EL §204R).²⁶ But the key here is a third point: Hegel sees in Aristotle the claim that a living being is the result of self-organization insofar as organisms produce others, and are produced by others, *the same in kind or concept*. That is to say, the relation between the individual and the kind or concept is so intimate that the concept is the substance of a living being, allowing type and token to stand in for one another in meeting the requirements for self-organization. One formulation that draws on the intimate relation is this: an organism "produces itself as another individual of the same species [*Gattung*]" (PP 4:32/142). Hegel even expresses the point by glossing a passage from Aristotle:

That which is produced is as such in the ground, that is, it is an end [*Zweck*], kind [*Gattung*] in itself, it is by the same token prior, before it becomes actual, as potentiality. Man generates men; what the product is, is also the producer. (VGP 19:176)²⁷

But regardless of Aristotle's precise meaning, Hegel cannot argue against Kant by merely asserting this type-token intimacy as an account of self-organization. The point of the three-part analysis is to defend it. And we can see the strength of the defense by noting how Hegel's position can rest on Kant's own analysis. Just consider Kant on the teleology of artifacts. For example, "[i]n a watch . . . one part is certainly present for the sake of the other" (KU 5:374). So the watch satisfies R1: "parts . . . are possible only through their relation to the whole" (KU 5:373). But the token gears are not present because

²⁴ Or: "all the members and component parts of men are simply means for the self-preservation of the individual which is here the end" (VPR 17:503/330).

²⁵ E.g., EN §245Z.

²⁶ Compare also Aristotle, *Physics* II.8, 198b36–199b33.

²⁷ This is Aristotle's explanation for how formal, final, and *efficient* causes all tend to coincide in the cases discussed in *Physics* II.7, 198a14f. Deflationists who seek support from Aristotle tend to overlook such passages, and see Aristotle as taking formal and final causes to be simply independent of efficient and material causes (e.g., deVries 1991, 52–54).

of “their” relation to the whole in the sense of *those very tokens’* consequences for the token whole. For the tokens cannot have such consequences (as far as we know) until *after* the process by which they came to be present here. Kant’s point must be that the token parts are present because of a prior representation of their consequences. But the represented concept is something *general*, a *type* itself indifferent to how many tokens there are. And the gears (tokens) are present because of “their” consequences in the sense of the consequences of the gear (types) within the watch (type). So to make sense of artifact teleology at all, and to enact the high standard that will make so much trouble for natural teleology, Kant himself needs to allow at least this first way in which token and type are intimate enough to be replaceable in the analysis of teleology.

Given this allowance, Hegel’s analysis will meet its goal. First it will show how R1 can be met without any represented concept, because a type in the sense of a species or kind can do the same work without any intelligent representation at all. Imagine a token elm tree. The token elm has token parts of different types. A part of the elm, a leaf (token), has been produced by prior generations that share that very same part (type). Now our new leaf (token) certainly benefits the whole elm (token): it assimilates from the environment. But this is not sufficient for teleology; Kant’s R1 requires that the benefit must be why the leaf exists in this system at all. *If* the demand were addressed to and answerable by only the token, *then* skepticism would indeed follow. For the token does not benefit the whole until after it has come to be present there (as far as we can know). But the relevance of Hegel’s insistence on the need for assimilation and the process of reproduction is now clear: The new leaf (token) is only possible insofar as the leaf (type) benefits the whole elm (type) in its struggle to assimilate enough to survive and reproduce. For if this leaf (type) did not have that benefit, then prior systems (of this type) could never be able to produce the new leaf (token). The leaf is its own ground and so has a teleological function; or in terms of Hegel’s gloss on Aristotle: “[t]hat which is produced is as such in the ground, that is, it is an end.” With life generally, a part (token) is possible only insofar as that part (type) plays its beneficial role in relation to the whole (type). So the parts are present specifically on account of the way in which they are a benefit to the whole. Given the intimacy of type and token, the leaf is a means to the end, purpose, or *Zweck* of assimilating energy from the environment, and in turn the end of self-preservation; it is there for that reason.

Second, the same considerations will show, for the same reason, that an organism is not just organized but *self-organizing*, or would also be a *Naturzweck*, or would be characterized by truly *inner* purposiveness. The too-easy way to put the point here is just this: our elm above satisfies R1 *without anything like intelligent representation on the part of an external designer*; the

purposiveness is not external. But that is just a negative point. What is more important is Kant's positive analysis and specifically the second requirement, R2: in a *Naturzweck* the parts themselves must be responsible for the organization of the whole, and so for the other parts. And this will be so for our elm: the parts (tokens) are present on account of the effectiveness of those very parts (types). The effectiveness of those parts (types) itself brings about a new token system, in which each part is thus means to the ends of the other parts. Or, the organism is characterized by "inner purposiveness," so that (as Kant says) "everything is an end and reciprocally a means as well" (KU 5:376). It follows from the use of Kant's own analysis that something can be *self*-organizing in virtue of the way its *type* is responsible for the organization, or that (to turn toward more Hegelian terms) its type or concept is its own substance. Having allowed the connection between type and token to satisfy part of the analysis in the case of artifacts that raise the difficult standard, for Kant to block it here would be ad hoc.

It should now be clear that Hegel's "Life" is not trying to begin with brute mechanical happenings and then reduce teleology *away*. To begin with, the point is to call attention to the explanatory inferences we draw in the case of life: Kant himself holds that we do in fact think of life in teleological terms. But it turns out that, when we are doing this, we are also drawing inferences about kinds, and in this case about a very intimate connection between type and token. Granted, *that* we think in this way is not itself reason to conclude that we know this to be the case, given Kant's challenge. It is here that Hegel requires his argument, which in effect shows that Kant's own considerations can only mount a challenge insofar as they also covertly *support* this way of thinking of type and token, and so to support natural teleology. Hegel's defense simply takes the same machinery from the challenge raised by Kant's view of artifacts, and applies this consistently. So the apparent reasons for being skeptical about natural teleology are in fact reasons to be optimistic about its reality and knowability.

Strictly speaking, it would remain for Hegel to demonstrate that we have knowledge of actual organisms as satisfying the analysis of life. Discussing the empirical evidence concerning actual, empirical organisms is the task of the *Philosophy of Nature* rather than the *Logic*; but what is needed for this response to Kant will be uncontroversial, because it is clear that there are living beings, and that they do assimilate and reproduce.

3.6 Hegel's Terms: The Concept, the Concrete Universal, and Immediacy

There are two ways in which we should appreciate more carefully how Hegel uses his terminology to state the argument in the *Logic*. The first way concerns

his term “concept” (*Begriff*). Hegel does not see himself as rejecting Kant’s argument that natural teleology demands an originating concept; he takes himself to be accepting Kant’s demand, while showing that this demand can be met by something unlike a “concept” in any ordinary sense of that term, including anything that must be represented by an intelligence in order to have any effect. It can be met by the concept (*Begriff*) specifically in the sense of a kind or species (*Gattung*) of reproducing individuals: the “product” of the process of reproduction is “the *realized species* [*Gattung*], which has posited itself as identical with the concept [*Begriff*]” (WL 6:486/688).

We can also compare and contrast life to the primitive case of the concept or *Begriff* of matter, crucial to Hegel’s account of mechanism. Both are cases of a concept in the sense of something general, and both are unlike a concept in the ordinary sense of a representation. But there are also differences, which we can note by attending to the possibility of normative malfunction. True, gravitation is the concept of matter, but this is a law-governed and non-teleological case of such a concept. Two material bodies might be directed by the gravitation that is their nature toward a collision; but if they instead fall into a stable orbit and never collide then this is no normative malfunction. Nor would a body getting knocked out of orbit be a malfunction. The reason there is normativity and teleology in the case of life, by contrast, is the intimate relation here between type and token, which Hegel also calls “concrete universality.” This involves a specific kind of relation between the universal, the particular, and the individual. That relation is explained in the biological case in this way: One side of the coin is that there is here a universal type that particularizes itself, giving the substance or nature of independent individuals that differ in particular ways. The other side of the coin is that it is also the actions of these individuals—rather than any represented “marks” in a represented concept—that distinguish themselves from everything else in a struggle to survive (assimilation) and bind themselves together as instances of one and the same general kind or concept by relations of reproduction whose “product” is the identity of concept and species. There is nothing like this in the case of matter. And the result here is full teleology, with normativity, because a part of a token organism can malfunction relative to the purposes or ends *on account of which it is present at all*—the function it plays in the species or type. For example, imagine a mouse born with a heart unable to pump enough blood. If this heart has never pumped enough blood, then how can we say that *its* own or inner purpose or function is to pump more? The answer is: on account of the species from which it comes. Thus, in the case of life, the possibility of “defect” or malfunction is relative to “the rule, the characteristic of the species or class.”²⁸

²⁸ EN §368Z. In the English edition this is §370Z.

Hegel's view here brings with it a kind of metaphysical holism with respect to life: an individual living being is what it is not on account of what is contained within a local region of space and time, but in virtue of its connections with others of its type. The concept or *Begriff*—not the underlying matter—is the “substance” of life.

In this sort of case, we can explain the concrete universality, or intimate connection: there is a whole system in which the universal particularizes itself, and the particulars make this possible by connecting themselves together under the universal. And with such “concrete universality” there can be an objective normative judgment, which

contains the two moments, the objective universal or the kind [*Gattung*] and the *singularized universal*. Here we have, therefore, the universal that is *itself* and continues through *its opposite*, and is a universal only in *unity* with the latter.

The standard in normative judgment is not an abstract universal by itself, but the intimate connection or correspondence between universal and particular:

it is not the ought or the kind [*Gattung*] by itself, but this *correspondence* which is the *universality* that constitutes the predicate of the apodictic judgment. (WL 6:349/585–86)

So we can have the natural teleology and normativity only where we have this concrete universality, or intimate connection of type and token—and we have that only where we can explain it, as we can in biological cases in terms of the relation between biological individuals and species. This is what makes possible the answer to Kant. But, having accepted Kant's challenge, Hegel's answer also restricts our application of teleological notions: no one following Hegel can hold that matter, for example, is similarly teleological and normative—that matter aims to live up to a standard, in terms of which it might be lacking—since it lacks anything like that complex reciprocal connection.

We can now return to Hegel's use of these terms in his own statement of his argument in “Life.” In short, Hegel argues that concrete universality, or this intimate relation of token and type, is the key to his resolution of Kant's challenge concerning a *Naturzweck*. Contrast the view according to which a concept can only be “the formal concept” that is a subjective representation abstracted from particulars by means of reflection, and external to them. Given that view, Hegel acknowledges that Kant's problem would be irresolvable: “[t]hat way of thinking that clings to the determinations of reflective relations and of the formal concept, when it comes to consider life” can indeed only

find an “*incomprehensible mystery*.” But this is because that view fails to grasp the possibility of the concept or *Begriff* as the species or type, and the intimate connection between type and token in which the type is the substance of the token: “for reflection does not grasp the concept, nor does it grasp it as the substance of life” (WL 6:472/678). So Hegel argues specifically that the concept as substance of an individual makes possible natural teleology.

The other, second way of appreciating Hegel’s terms for the argument of “Life” is to follow his references there to the terms *immediacy* and *presupposition*. In particular, the first step of Hegel’s analysis governs only part-whole relations or “the process of the living *within* itself” (EL §218). At first, then, we are not yet thinking of the individual in the context of the full analysis, including assimilation from the environment and reproduction in a species. Hegel cedes to Kant that, *if* we rest with only the ideas we have here at first, we cannot comprehend the possibility of the production of a natural teleological system. If so, then the production can only be a *presupposition*. So Hegel begins his discussion of the third and final requirement by saying: “[t]he living individual, at first cut off from the universal concept of life, is a presupposition yet unproven through itself.” He continues to emphasize that it is only in adding requirements that we get to the point that we can comprehend the production: “its coming to be, which was a *presupposing*, now becomes its production” (WL 6:484/686). Hegel also expresses the point by saying that, originally, there was no *mediation* through which to understand the genesis of a teleological system: the genesis was presupposed as *immediate*. But in discussing the *Gattungsprozess*, Hegel says that “the living individual in general, at first presupposed as immediate, emerges now as something *mediated* and *produced*” (EL §221).

It is clear here, looking at Hegel’s own terms for the argument, that he does not try to answer Kant by just positing any kind of brute, primitive, or immediate teleological reasons or explainers, nor to deflate Kant’s problem; Hegel cedes that the force of the Kantian challenge requires an explanation of natural teleology for its defense, and in particular an account of the origin of supposed *Naturzwecke*, and Hegel provides this in the form of his account of the concept as the substance of life.

3.7 Metaphysically Robust Compatibilism and Mediated Immediacy

I noted above Kant’s claim that teleology and mechanism, applied to a knowable material system, would be incompatible. Hegel’s argument, by contrast, is a case for the knowable compatibility of explanation of underlying matter

by necessary law and explanation of the whole by teleology. Thus, Hegel also praises Aristotle's philosophy of nature for defending "two determinations: the conception of end and the conception of necessity" (VGP 19:173/2:156). It is important that Hegelian compatibilism is not a view that seeks comfort in a lack of surprising or far-reaching metaphysical claims; it is a metaphysics on which, for example, living beings are what they are in virtue of their concept, and not in virtue of the stuff within certain spatio-temporal bounds.

To begin with, in Hegel's case, some work toward compatibilism is provided by his account of mechanism. *Fundamentalist* mechanism might have seemed to promise to establish that mechanism from below is a sort of ultimate power—akin to the God of rational theology—trumping everything else. But Hegel has a powerful argument against this view. Mechanism, on his resulting account, is more like a degenerate or weak form of almost-teleology than something distinct in a manner that gives it a self-evident trumping power.

Hegel's discussions of teleology also contribute to the compatibilism. To be sure, Hegel does not hold that *living beings* can also be explained in non-teleological terms. The basic reason is that the substance of a living being is its function or inner purpose, and so the concept or *Begriff*, species or kind. This is the metaphysically ambitious claim about the distinct being or substance of the living being. Similarly, strictly speaking, a living being does not (Hegel says) have "parts" but "members,"²⁹ whose substance is their function.³⁰ Neither organism nor members, then, are mechanically explicable.

But this is not to deny the applicability of lower-level forms of mechanical and chemical explanation within the spatio-temporal bounds of a living being. The point is rather that there are two ways of grasping or taking, both targeted in the same direction: we can grasp the living being and its members, or the underlying mechanical chemical stuff that is not a life. Hegel says:

when a living thing is taken to be . . . itself a mechanical or chemical product . . . the concept is taken as external to it, the individual itself as something *dead*. Since the concept is immanent in it, the *purposiveness* of the living being is to be grasped as *inner*. (WL 2:419/680)

For example, the transition from assimilated external elements into blood is not explicable in terms of necessitating or mechanical causes (WL 6:228/496). Still, we can analyze what is going on there in terms of underlying chemical elements, even if this does not explain blood *as such*: "blood which has been

²⁹ WL 6:476/681; also VL 210–11.

³⁰ E.g., "individual members of the body are what they are only by means of their unity and in relation to it" (EL §216Z).

analyzed into these constituents is no longer living blood” (EN §365Z; also EL §219Z). The chemical view leaves out of account why such elements are present here at all. For the explanation that stands behind all this we must return to biology and teleology: those elements are present here, in this arrangement, because this contributes to assimilation, which is necessary for self-preservation.

Hegel sometimes employs the term “indifference,” so important in previous and subsequent chapters of this book, to make this last point: when it comes to the explanation of some process by which life preserves itself, the underlying chemical elements are merely *indifferent* to the reasons why they are present in this arrangement; they do not care and cannot have a say, as it were, with regard to how they might be *used*. In Hegel’s terms:

The indifference of the objective world to determinateness and hence to purpose is what constitutes its external aptitude to conform. (WL 5:482/685).

This position strikes a balance whose significance will be great as we proceed. Living beings have a kind of independence in their dependence. In one sense, the living being is *dependent* on or *conditioned* by the underlying stuff: it could not exist without there being stuff in which to be realized. But this is a kind of dependence or conditioning that is also a matter of *indifference* when it comes to the explanatory importance of teleology: the teleological explainers operate independently, explaining why stuff with just these lawful features is present in any particular case. We could also call this a mediated immediacy. Life is mediated by mechanism insofar as it is dependent on it. But it also has immediacy in the sense of independent explanatory import. Hegel puts the point in terms of immediacy by referring to the stuff composing an organism as “the objectivity that it possesses immediately as its means and instrument and which is externally determinable” (WL 6:479/683). This mediated immediacy will be an important hint below concerning Hegel’s broader metaphysics, and the need to distinguish reason from non-explanatory dependence on a substrate.

It may seem natural to ask whether this Hegelian view is more similar to Cartesian substance dualism, or rather to recent non-reductive, physicalist monism. But we are just now getting to the point of beginning to see that Hegel’s account of life is part of a metaphysics that will reject both, for similar reasons: Hegel is working on rethinking the nature of substance itself entirely in terms of reason in the world, and no longer in terms of the sort of dependence mentioned in the previous paragraph. It will turn out, on Hegel’s robust view, that the physical realizers are not substances, substance, or substantial; and life is; but I return to this topic in §8.4.

Finally, note that neither a purely inflationary nor a purely deflationary response to Kant is consistent with the work Hegel does for his compatibilism. Take the pure deflationism that would deny that teleology carries any implication about the explanation of the origin of a system. This would be compatibilist, to be sure, but deflated “teleology” and mechanism would be all too obviously compatible approaches to a token organism, just as a description of the meaning of a song’s lyrics is obviously compatible with a description of its melody. Hegel’s complex appeal to assimilation and reproduction, and his appeal to the general species as a kind of concept or *Begriff* as the substance of life, or the intimate connection between token and type, and the consequent metaphysical holism—all of this would be irrelevant and unnecessary to establish such compatibilism and the possibility and knowability of natural teleology.

Or consider an inflationary appeal to immediate teleological powers in matter or a substrate of it. One problem with this, as an interpretation of Hegel, is again that anyone making that appeal can just make it directly with reference to token organisms; all of the complex work in “Life,” concerning the species, concept and holism, would be irrelevant. In Hegel, all that is not irrelevant. So Hegel’s response to Kant is neither purely inflationary nor deflationary; he takes a more complicated approach.

3.8 Interpretive and Philosophical Objections and Replies

Summarizing, then, in a first respect Hegel’s response to Kant is partially inflationary: he accepts Kant’s R1/explanatory demand. In a second respect it is deflationary: Hegel argues that R1 can be satisfied without meeting Kant’s inflationary *representation required*, and so without *full inflationism* and in fact without any demands at all about underlying constituent matter (except that there must be something underlying) and without any demands at all about any sort of supersensible substrate of nature transcending temporality. And then in a third respect it is again partly inflationary: Hegel does not simply dispense with the representation requirement, but rather substitutes for it the addition of a new and different demand: for inner purposiveness to be possible, there must be an assimilating and reproducing species, which establishes an intimate relation between biological token and the type or concept.

There is a similar complicated balance in response to Kant’s claim that *knowledge* of real inner purposiveness or *Naturzwecke* would require a superior intellect. On the one hand, Hegel argues that knowledge of natural teleology requires *less* than Kant says: Hegel denies that knowledge of real inner

purposiveness requires knowledge either of matter as intelligent or of a supersensible substrate of matter. On the other hand, Hegel is not going so far in a deflationary direction as to argue that we only need or require knowledge of spatio-temporal particulars, or that natural teleology reduces away to certain arrangements of such particulars. Rather, knowledge of natural teleology does require a kind of shift of perspective. To understand the inner purposiveness of life, we must “grasp the concept” and “grasp it as the substance of life” (WL 6:472/678). This does require recognizing a sense in which the substance of an organism is stretched in time, as it were: the token is not what it is in virtue of just the stuff at a particular local place in space and time, but in virtue of its concept or type, which is not something located at a spatio-temporal location. But this is not to require knowledge extending all the way down to the matter and beyond into the supersensible. And it is not to require an immediate grasp of reality all at once. It is to require the possibility of rational inference to knowledge of what explains observed phenomena in space and time, where the explainer is not a spatio-temporal particular but a specific kind of concept or *Begriff*.

One interpretive objection would argue that Hegel rather posits a brute or immediate teleological power, specifically the form of an “omnipresent soul [*Seele*].” But Hegel’s point in such passages is very different. The references to “soul” refer to the capacity of a living being to orient itself toward what it needs to assimilate, for example, as roots grow toward water. But this is not a solution; it is a way of stating the problem to be solved in the manner discussed above. What Hegel is saying at the *beginning* of his treatment is that an account in terms of soul only taken as *immediate* would *remain inadequate*: “[t]he idea of life *in its immediacy* is as yet only the creative universal soul” (WL 6:472/678–79; emphasis added). What Hegel seeks to do is not to take this as immediate, or appeal only to soul, but to explain this in terms of the concept or *Begriff*, in the manner discussed above.

Kantians might lodge several philosophical objections. First, they might claim that Hegel’s natural teleology is not *genuine* teleology at all, because it lacks an origin in any prior representation. But this will not work, because Kantians cannot just *assert* that teleology requires prior representation. If they did *that*, then opponents would be within their rights to respond that they make sense of teleology in every sense *except the sense merely stipulated*. Kant himself does not just stipulate but *argues*, from R1. This commits Kantians to a standard of genuine teleology: R1. If Hegel can show how R1 can be met without originating representations—and I have just argued that he can, given Kant’s own application of R1 to artifacts—then this is powerful rejoinder.

Perhaps Kantians would complain that Hegel fails to demonstrate *inner* purposiveness specifically insofar as he fails to show that the underlying

matter is responsible for any teleological organization of an organism. But the rejoinder here is as above. Kantians cannot just *assert* that inner purposiveness requires anything special of the matter. Kant *argues* from R2. If Hegel can meet R2's demand that the organization is due to the parts, without making any requirements of the matter, then this is a successful rejoinder. And I have just argued that Kant's own application of R1 artifacts will provide Hegel the tools to do so.³¹

Other philosophical objections might claim that Hegel's account is unacceptable because Hegel himself makes claims that contradict now well-established results in the biological sciences. In response, it is important to concede that there are many scientific questions for which Hegel has no answers, or no good answers. One such question is this: How could there have been a transition from a universe of lifeless matter to a universe with life? Another is: How did there come to be the specific biological species that there are? Hegel is in no position to explain any of this. In the *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel even seems to deny the possibility of the different species emerging from a common ancestor (EN §339Z), and we know that this claim would be false.

But Hegel's *Logic* argument in response to Kant, if successful on the counts already covered above, would also show that these other questions are irrelevant to the defense of natural teleology. First, Hegel does not in the *Logic* undertake to explain a transition from lifeless matter to living beings. He does not need to do so in order to answer Kant's skepticism about inner purposiveness. For Kant's analysis concerns not matter but the relation of part and whole in an organism and its genesis. The analysis itself does not concern the origin of a *species*, nor of all life.³²

Note also in this connection that Hegel gives no defense of teleological explanation of the *historical development of a species*. Rather, he defends teleological explanation of the structure of a living being, and so also of the behavior that this structure makes possible. All this is explicable in terms of the immanent end of self-preservation. But Hegel's discussion of natural teleology does not require that a species once lacked, and then came to possess certain features; so it does not require that this happened for teleological or

³¹ Compare Düsing's (1986b, 283) reading: Hegel seeks to respond to "the traditional problem" concerning an anti-mechanistic account of life, formulated by Kant as a trilemma concerning how to explain the possibility of living matter. Düsing (1986b, 284) sees Hegel as addressing the problem by appeal to an immaterial soul, resting on unproven metaphysical assumptions. But I am arguing that the fundamental problem in Kant neither directly concerns matter, nor demands such an explanation of living matter, which Hegel does not anyway provide.

³² Kant does claim that appeal to the history of a species would "merely put off the explanation" and so the problem of the *Naturzweck* (KU 5:419–20); for the reason noted here I do not think this claim is supported by the argument concerning his actual analysis.

any other reasons. I think that Hegel actually denies the possibility of such teleological explanation of biological species-change.³³ But the point is unimportant here. For if Hegel in “Life” successfully meets Kant’s standard *without appealing to any requirements concerning how and even whether a species changes in history*, then Hegel effectively demonstrates that those issues are not relevant to the philosophical problem of natural teleology. So although Hegel elsewhere makes any number of claims about the scientific issues, none of them are required for the *Logic’s* philosophical rejoinder to Kant concerning the possibility and knowability of *Naturzwecke*.

A Kantian might want to develop a philosophical objection defending the relevance of issues about the history of the species, perhaps along these lines: imagine that some heap of matter were *by mere coincidence* to jump from a lifeless state and into the state of a simple one-celled organism, *X*. Kant and Hegel both accept R1, so they should agree that *X* is not a teleological system: the parts are *ex hypothesis* present only by coincidence. But if this organism also were to assimilate and produce further generations, *Y* and *Z*, then the offspring could satisfy Hegel’s analysis. A Kantian could argue that the offspring would still be non-teleological systems, given their similarity to the first *X*, thus providing reason to reject Hegel’s position.

Such a thought experiment is alien to Hegel’s procedure, but a Hegelian can answer in the same spirit, saying: subsequent generations *Y* and *Z* do satisfy Hegel’s account and are teleological systems.³⁴ The rejoinder meets Kant’s analysis, which concerns parts and whole *in an individual system*, and does not defend any special requirements on *the origin of a species*; if a Kantian wants to press the point, then she needs a different original analysis and argument. And this kind of Hegelian response would be unsurprising given Hegel’s metaphysical holism about life: it would not matter even if everything within the spatio-temporal bounds of *X* and *Y* is absolutely identical; *Y* is what it is on account of its relation to its production within a species and differs from *X* for that reason.

³³ Hegel does defend teleological explanation of the development of what he calls *Geist* or spirit, to be discussed below. He contrasts *Geist* with life in this respect (EL §234Z; VPN 184–85). A biological species can go extinct, without a purpose explaining why (VGP 19:175/2:158; and EN §339Z, p. 280). In general, “even the species are completely subject to the changes of the external, universal life of nature” (EN §368A [in the German edition] = §370A [in the English translation]).

³⁴ Thompson (1995) gives an account of life, mentioning Hegel, which stresses this kind of holism. If I understand him, our arguments differ: I am arguing that Hegel’s account along these lines must and does solve Kant’s problem about the *explanation of the origin* of a teleological system, given that Kant’s inflationary R1 is (in my view) correct. Thompson addresses a different problem concerning of what distinguishes life, or the “form of description” appropriate to life.

There may still be those who still worry that Hegel's position must have been rendered simply obsolete by subsequent developments in the biological sciences. The easiest way to see why this is not so is to note that the elements needed for Hegel's view are still present within debates in the contemporary philosophy of biology, where all sides agree on the truth and importance of natural selection and other recent scientific results.

In recent debates the broad polarization is between anti- and neo-teleologists. Anti-teleologists open the door for Hegel in the way that Kant does, by their appeal to artifact teleology. For example, Cummins says: "the question, 'why is x there?' can be answered by specifying x 's function only if x is or is part of an artifact" (1975, 746). But he cannot mean that the part of an artifact, the token x , goes back in time and accounts for why x is there. He means that x is present because of " x 's function" only in the sense of what a part of x 's *type* is supposed to do, thus allowing type to stand in for token in assessing what is x 's own. And this is what Hegel exploits to defend natural teleology without intelligent design.

With the neo-teleologists the link to Hegel's key commitment is closer, even if this is not articulated clearly. The basis of the neo-teleologist position is the "historical" account of biological function; Neander's approach "makes a trait's function depend on its history, more specifically . . . on its evolutionary history" (1991a, 168). Hegel shares the initial claim for the importance of history, but requires only a history of reproduction rather than a specifically *evolutionary* history. What Hegel shows is that the intimacy of type and token does all of the work needed to support teleology, given just reproduction; if so, then natural selection is irrelevant to the issue of such teleology. And note here the same intimacy of type and token: Neander is accounting for the function of a token trait, and this is accounted for in terms of "its history"; but a token does not have an evolutionary history; so the contemporary view must allow that a requirement on the token, or on "its history," can be satisfied by the *type*. This allowance plays an important role in Neander's analogue of Kant's explanatory demand:

teleological explanations of the functional variety . . . refer to a future effect of a trait for which that trait was selected. In doing so they explain the trait by implicitly referring to the causally efficacious selection process from which it resulted. (Neander 1991b, 463)

This allows the token trait to be explained in terms of *its* effects, even though the token's effects lie in the future, because the token is explained by the effects of the type.

Note that neo-teleologists do not reduce biological types to tokens, biological norms to the non-normative, or biological teleology to the

non-teleological. Take a token heart that is not doing a good job of pumping blood. Neo-teleologists say it is failing at *its* function: “The heart that cannot perform its proper function . . . is still a heart” (Neander 1991a, 180). The position must be that the token is what it is in virtue of its place in the history of the type. Millikan says:

failure to work or to work right or well does not automatically transform a human body into something else. . . . The objects that physiologists study—human bodies, circulatory systems, red blood cells, etc.—fall in a different kind of ontological category than do organic molecules. (1993, 55)

Hegel’s version of this claim is simply that the concept or *Begriff*, in the form of the species or kind, is “the substance of life” (WL 6:472/678). In neither case is the point to reduce away biological teleology or types. (Granted, neo-teleologists do tend to want to reduce all teleology and normativity, including that form appropriate to the use of concepts, to the form of biological teleology and normativity; Hegel takes a different view of *that* issue, discussed in chapter 9.)

Anti-teleologists’ most prominent charge against neo-teleologists is that natural selection cannot provide the needed sort of explanation: it explains the frequency of a trait in the species, but without explaining any individual case.³⁵ One response is that the objection assumes a philosophical commitment to *individualist essentialism*.³⁶ This debate is interesting for our purposes, first, because it indicates that there are philosophical commitments at work on all sides; the anti-teleological alternative to Hegel’s view is not proven by the biological sciences; it requires a metaphysical commitment, at odds with Hegel’s concept thesis, often simply assumed in discussions of those results. Second, we can actually see here a potential advantage of Hegel over contemporary neo-teleologists. A contemporary Hegelian could then argue that, once you make the type-token point explicit, you do not need to build into your account any further controversial philosophical claims about how natural selection explanations work. We could then analyze natural teleology, with Hegel, as requiring only the struggle for survival and reproduction, treating species changes as irrelevant.³⁷ There should not be anything controversial about natural selection, of course, but there is plenty

³⁵ Sober (1984).

³⁶ Matthen (1999).

³⁷ A similar view is defended by Buller (1998, 507). Richardson’s (unpublished, 107) interpretation of Aristotle distinguishes this kind of view and considers the possible evidence for finding it in Aristotle.

of debate, among those who take it as uncontroversial, about its philosophical implications. Insofar as fewer controversial premises is a strength, lacking a need to take a stand in those philosophical debates would be a continuing strength of Hegel's position. Here too, just as with Kant, Hegel's view has not been shown to be outdated, but is an alternative to currently popular views. So understanding Kant's and Hegel's neglected positions can in fact help us to better understand the terrain on which these debates about teleology still play out today.

PART TWO

THE INESCAPABLE PROBLEM OF COMPLETE REASONS

Kant's Dialectic Critique of Metaphysics

We have seen, at this point, how Hegel pursues the project of a metaphysics of reason, producing philosophical arguments for his claims about how imminent concepts (*Begriffe*) are the reasons in terms of which things can be explained. And we have found this project to be surprisingly immune to epistemology-first critique. But there are two reasons why all this progress still leaves us only beginning to understand Hegel's metaphysics. The first is that this kind of program in metaphysics is vulnerable to the argument of the Transcendental Dialectic of Kant's first *Critique*. Second, this leaves us still short of Hegel's aim to systematically reconstruct metaphysics in light of the Dialectic, which will lead to the most distinctive features of his theoretical philosophy, such as his claims about the reality of contradiction, "the absolute idea," and so on. In Part II, then, I will look in detail at the Dialectic argument for the restriction of our knowledge and the impossibility of metaphysics for us (chapter 4) and look at the possible openings for counterargument available to Hegel (chapter 5).

Two of the themes most important for this study will unfold across both chapters. The first is Kant's argument for the *inescapability* of philosophical problems about completeness of conditions, or the unconditioned (§4.2). This conclusion will be something that Hegel incorporates from the Dialectic, building from it to his attempt to defend a complete

system, in which everything relates complete or absolute reason in the world (§5.1). But this inescapability conclusion of Kant's is not a popular view today, I think it is safe to say; so it is crucial that we build from the results of previous chapters toward an appreciation of the strength of Kant's argument on this point.

The second key point concerns the breadth of Kant's critique of metaphysics. Interpreters of Hegel, and also of Kant, sometimes miss this, insofar as they think that Kant's argument undercuts only forms of metaphysics which posit a distinction between worldly and otherworldly entities. And so some will say that the Dialectic critique need not apply to Spinozist metaphysics, for example, with its *immanent* God. Others will say that it need not apply to Aristotle's account of substance, with its *non-separable* universals. But it will be crucial that the Dialectic critique does not target an image—such as that of special entities, on one side, and the observable world, on the other—but a form of argument, which builds a metaphysics around the need for intelligibility, explainers, or reasons. And this critique provides excellent cause for concern, as well, for those who favor Spinoza's metaphysics (§4.1)—and, more to the point, for those who favor the non-separable universals or concepts to which we have already seen Hegel appeal (§5.1). Understanding Hegel's system will require first understanding the breadth and force of this criticism of metaphysics, to which Hegel is fundamentally responding.

Kant's Dialectic Argument and the Restriction of Knowledge

Here a new phenomenon of human reason shows itself, namely a wholly natural antithetic . . . into which reason falls of itself and even unavoidably; and thus it guards reason against the slumber of an imagined conviction . . . but at the same time leads reason into the temptation either to surrender itself to a skeptical hopelessness or else to assume an attitude of dogmatic stubbornness. . . . Either alternative is the death of a healthy philosophy, though the former might also be called the **euthanasia** of pure reason.

—Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A407/B433–34

I turn now to Kant's Transcendental Dialectic case, from the first *Critique*, for the restriction of our knowledge and the impossibility of the metaphysics of reason. I introduced this topic above (§0.4), but it is now time to consider Kant's arguments more carefully. For, as usual, appreciating the strength of Kant's own arguments will be crucial in seeking to appreciate the strength of Hegel's response. The basic idea of the Dialectic argument, as I will read it, is this: Our pursuit of theoretical inquiry requires guidance and, specifically, guidance from reason's idea of the unconditioned. Insofar as this requires taking an interest in completeness of conditions, it is inevitable that we should take an interest in more direct questions about this topic: Could there really be anything unconditioned, or anything that would make possible absolutely complete explanation? Must there be? Or can we rule it out?

Kant argues that the most obvious kinds of responses will be inadequate. I consider those responses in a manner organized by the epigraph above: First, rationalist responses would affirm that there must always be unconditioned grounds, or complete reasons for anything conditioned. But such views entangle themselves in contradictions that force them to become unacceptably

dogmatic. Here we must take care to appreciate that Kant's argument does not just target an image of specifically otherworldly metaphysical objects; it targets a much more prevalent way of arguing (§4.1). Second, anti-rationalist views would either deny the existence of the unconditioned, or else argue that the very idea is a matter of indifference, whether because it is ill-formed or otherwise simply uninteresting. Here too we must take care to appreciate the strength of Kant's reply, because his claim is unfamiliar and will be important for Hegel. In short, the denial will turn out just as dogmatic as the assertion. And both the denial and indifferentism would amount (Kant argues) to an unacceptable "skeptical hopelessness," a form of "euthanasia of pure reason." For if we could demonstrate from the beginning that there cannot be any unconditioned to be sought, then this would be to know that all endeavors irreplaceably guided by that goal are pointless. And the same applies if we could demonstrate from the beginning that the very idea is a matter of indifference. The conclusion of such an argument would be that all theoretical inquiry and arguments are pointless (§4.2).

Kant argues that, given the unacceptability of all of these kinds of responses to questions about the unconditioned, there is only one acceptable alternative, and he finds it to be radical and new. This is transcendental idealism, including the specific consequence of most importance here: our knowledge is drastically limited or restricted, and specifically by bounds of sensibility, leaving us in principle unable to know whether or not there is anything unconditioned. This guarantees the room needed for ideas of the unconditioned to play their guiding role, allowing scientific inquiry, in particular, to make asymptotic progress; it establishes that such inquiry faces neither the threat that rationalist metaphysics might trump it by jumping directly to its final goal of complete explanation, nor the threat that anti-rationalism might show inquiry to be pointless. Thus, the Dialectic argument "guards reason" against becoming entangled in actual attempts to justify answers to metaphysical questions, or falling back into either dogmatism or skepticism (§4.3).

4.1 Rationalist Affirmation Is Either Self-Contradictory or Dogmatic

Although the Dialectic aims to advance a problem supposed to affect all prior philosophies, it is best to begin with rationalist metaphysics specifically. For understanding Hegel, it will be crucial to see the broad extent of Kant's target, and his ability to argue without taking as a premise any epistemic limit.

The rationalist position at issue here takes a straightforward stand concerning the existence of unconditioned grounds, namely, that there must always

be unconditioned grounds for everything merely conditioned. Kant's view here is carefully balanced. He is arguing that we must think of unconditioned grounds, or a completion for the regress of conditions, in order for this goal to guide theoretical inquiry. But he is also arguing that this leaves us subject to the temptation of confusing this guidance with a principle about how reality must be (e.g., A297/B353). This is the principle that we are supposed to avoid misunderstanding:

when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given (i.e., contained in the object and its connection). (A307–8/B364)

The assertion of that principle, or arguments on that basis, defines what I will call “rationalism.” This is essentially the principle of sufficient reason (PSR) so important in the history of rationalist metaphysics: for anything that is not a sufficient reason for itself but rather conditioned by something else, there must be a complete series of conditions that provides for it a sufficient reason.¹ During the critical period, Kant's position is that our theoretical knowledge in this neighborhood is limited to the restricted principle that, for every event in time, there must be a cause in time (A201/B246). The rationalists hold a principle that is, in comparison, unrestricted in two senses: for *absolutely anything* there must ultimately be a ground that is itself *complete or sufficient*.²

We can better specify this rationalist principle in terms of its use: it is meant to be strong enough to rule out scenarios of the form of last turtle and only infinite turtles, in order to rule in some more complete or ultimate reason or ground. Leibniz's *Monadology*, for example, proceeds from the PSR (§32) to argue that there must be an “ultimate reason” outside of the regress of contingent truths, providing a sufficient reason for all of them (§37). A last contingent truth, not contingent on or conditioned by anything else would clearly violate the PSR, since there would be no reason it obtains rather than not. The only infinite turtles scenario would be the view that the grounds of a contingent truth are exhausted by infinite regress of contingent truths. But then we can take a bundling step: a conjunction of contingent truths is contingent; so the infinite conjunction of all these contingent truths would also be a contingent truth, thus leaving something without a reason. So from the PSR it

¹ I follow the argument of Kreines (2008a) in connecting this principle with the PSR. Note that this is to understand rationalism in terms that are not at base epistemological—not, for example, in terms of any claim about a priori knowledge.

² See, e.g., UE 8:198 for Kant's rejection of a unrestricted or rationalist PSR.

follows that there must be an ultimate reason, which is also a reason for itself in that its existence follows from its nature: “the ultimate reason of things must be in a necessary substance. . . . This is what we call God” (§38). The rationalist PSR is supposed to provide a general principle that is strong enough to rule in a kind of third turtle scenario: a special self-supporting turtle holding everything up, or a turtle with a jetpack.

It is important that Kant’s topic is a general pattern of argument, which can apply quite broadly; the target is not specific to any specific picture of God or anything supposed to be otherworldly. The case of Spinoza is especially important, given the popularity of reading Hegel as a kind of Spinozist. There is not enough space here to try to interpret Kant’s own thinking about Spinoza, especially given the developments in what Kant says about this during the critical period, at least partly in response to Jacobi and the *Pantheismusstreit* beginning in 1785. What is worth noting is simply that, whatever Kant may have thought about the matter at different points, Spinoza in fact fits the rationalist pattern defined by the argument of the Dialectic: Spinoza’s God is supposed to be a necessary substance (E1P7), and an ultimate reason for everything (E1P16). And although his arguments differ in many respects, Spinoza certainly appeals to a PSR in his proof of the existence of this God (E1P11D2).³ So no matter how many other respects there are in which Spinoza’s picture of God differs from Leibniz’s, his philosophy fits the same pattern. On the face of it, then, there is no room to side with Spinoza on these issues while claiming to accept Kant’s critique of rationalism.⁴

With respect to such rationalism, the Dialectic’s basic position is this: reason and its guidance leave us naturally tempted by the rationalist principle; but we cannot legitimately claim such theoretical knowledge. Kant sketches, for example, Leibniz’s argument from contingency to the rationalist conclusion: there must be a complete reason in terms of which everything is explicable, or a God in this specific sense, or “that the concept of which contains within itself the ‘Because’ to every ‘Why?’ . . . that which is in all ways sufficient as a condition.” Kant says that the faculty of reason itself makes this tempting: it is “the natural course taken by every human reason” (A584–5/B612–3). And yet the natural temptation of this argument takes nothing away from Kant’s famous critical ambitions: he is arguing that we should resist the temptation

³ I argue the case that Spinoza fits the pattern targeted by Kant in Kreines (2008a). Note that the very breadth that allows this pattern of argument to fit Spinoza’s conclusions as well is noted by Kant as a disadvantage of attempts to so argue for conventional theology: the “cosmological proof” of a “necessary being”, which is paradigmatically dogmatic, still leaves “unsettled whether this being is the world itself or a thing distinct from it” (A456/B484). I do not mean to argue here for any claim about Kant’s view specifically on Spinoza.

⁴ Contrast, for example, Beiser’s (2003, 55) reading of Hegel as modifying Spinozism, but agreeing with Kant’s critique of rationalism, insofar as this is taken to reject only a specifically “transcendent” infinite.

and conclude that we can have no theoretical knowledge of whether or not God exists.⁵

What, then, is the Transcendental Dialectic *argument* against rationalism, and how does it function without merely taking a premise about epistemic limits? The argument that rationalism calls itself into question is contained in the Antinomy section of the Dialectic. And the topic of the Antinomy is specifically “rational cosmology.” We can understand this topic in two steps. First, the topic involves a rationalist way of thinking. For the arguments here all turn on a PSR, or a demand for completeness of conditions:

The entire antinomy of pure reason rests on this dialectical argument: If the conditioned is given, then the whole series of all conditions for it is also given; now objects of the senses are given as conditioned; consequently, etc. (A497/B525)⁶

Kant says that this “major premise seems so natural and evident” (A497/B525); and that is the application of his view about a natural temptation to the PSR. (To be sure, Kant is arguing that the Antinomy creates problems for everyone, not just rationalists. But I begin with the respect in which rationalism is at issue.) Second, the target here is such rationalist thought applied to a specific topic, namely to “objects of the senses,” and specifically spatio-temporal forms of regress.

The first two or “mathematical” Antinomies concern attempts to think of the completion of reasons or conditions *within* a spatio-temporal regress, either in the whole of it, or in part of it (A417/B445). Kant argues that the results are simply incoherent: any attempt to think of the completion of conditions for an exhaustively spatio-temporal world will contradict itself.

The third and fourth “dynamical” Antinomies include consideration of a rationalist escape route, which involves positing an unconditioned ground for a spatio-temporal regress outside itself—for example, in a necessary being somehow outside of time. Here Kant will allow logical possibility, but argue that assertion of existence or nonexistence in any theoretical context would be unacceptably dogmatic.

With respect to the former kind of argument, for incoherence, we can look to the Second Antinomy discussion of parts and composition, which will best establish connections with Hegel. And it is easiest to start with the Antithesis of the Second Antinomy, attacking the possibility of simple or indivisible parts. The Antithesis begins with the assumption, for the sake of argument, that

⁵ See especially the B-Preface sketch of Kant's view, and the famous: “Thus I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith” (Bxxx). See more on “knowledge” in §4.3.

⁶ In stressing this passage, I am following Grier (2001).

there are simple parts; it argues that the assumption must be rejected because such parts would have to fill space, and so be divisible, resulting in contradiction: “the simple would be a substantial composite” (A435/B463). The best way to understand this is according to the standard pattern of rationalist argument against a last turtle: The case for simple parts would be that they are needed to provide reasons why the whole fills its spatial extension. But then the simple parts would seem to have to each fill some region of space, so as to add up in a way that explains the whole. And then the same why-question applies: Why do the parts fill their extensions? If parts were originally demanded in answer, then the simples too would require parts. So the attempt to think simple parts in space as a completion of the regress of conditions contradicts itself, and we must conclude instead that the regress is exhausted by an infinite descent of composition all the way down.⁷

The Thesis argument assumes, for the sake of argument, that the reasons for a whole are indeed exhausted by an infinite descent of composition; it argues that the assumption must be rejected, ruling out this “only infinite turtles” scenario. Compare the standard bundling move in the PSR argument from contingency: a conjunction of infinite contingent truths would still be contingent. Similarly, an infinite descent of composition would still be composition. So thinking the completeness of reasons would still demand further parts to enter into all this composition, as a reason for why there can be any composition here at all as opposed to nothing. In Kant’s terms:

[A]ssume that composite substances do not consist of simple parts: then, if all composition is removed in thought, . . . nothing at all would be left over. (A434/B462)

In sum, attempting to think of the completion for an exhaustively spatial regress would require both ruling in simple parts (by the Thesis) and also ruling out simple parts (by the Antithesis).

For rationalists, there seems to be an obvious escape from self-contradiction: they can assert that the sufficient reason for a regress in space and time is outside the regress. We can think of Leibniz’s monads here.⁸

⁷ Compare Leibniz’s use of the PSR against the idea of simples *in space* in the postscript to his Fourth Letter to Clarke, noted by Al-Azm (1972, 64).

⁸ Unlike in the Antithesis, the reasons or conditions in question in the Thesis are not reasons specifically for spatial features; the difference will be important for Hegel’s case (§6.3). See also Grier (2001, 207) on the generality of the Thesis’s targeting *any* arguments from reason’s demands to simples. She contrasts Al-Azm (1972, 60), who argues that the Thesis takes the specific form of the Newtonian side in debate with Leibnizians, which he takes in turn to reverse Kemp Smith’s equation of the Thesis with Leibnizians.

Leibniz employs the PSR that drives both sides above, and he has a way of combining them: the PSR demands that the regress in space must be infinite composition all the way down (Antithesis); but it also demands (Thesis) simple parts; so the simples must be extensionless, and ground from outside of the regress in space.

But Kant's Third and Fourth Antinomies argue that this general kind of rationalist escape route shows itself to be unacceptably dogmatic. Most helpful for our purposes here is the resolution of the Fourth Antinomy, concerning the regress of contingent alterations in time. Again the Thesis argues for existence, and the Antithesis against. But in these cases, the resolution argues that there are senses in which both sides can be satisfied, because here there can be a coherent idea of an ultimate reason for such a regress, *from outside it*: "a further condition different in kind, one that is not a part of the series but, as merely intelligible, lies outside the series" (A530/B558). What both sides must however admit is that we cannot have knowledge of whether or not any such things exists. For such knowledge would have to rest on a rational principle: the demand for complete explanation. And this same principle, Kant argues, equally well supports the existence and non-existence:

the same ground of proof from which the thesis of the existence of an original being was inferred, is used also in the antithesis to prove its non-existence, and indeed with equal rigor. (A459/B487)

More specifically, assume for the sake of argument that there is an unconditioned ground for the regress of contingent alterations; for reasons above, this cannot be in the regress, and so it would be an assumption about "an absolutely necessary cause of the world outside the world" (A453/B481). But a cause outside time would provide no explanation for why an effect occurs at one time rather than another, leaving an explanatory gap. Since rationalist completeness of reasons can permit nothing unexplained, it must rule out this explanatory gap. So it demands that the causality of the necessary being outside of time "would belong in time . . . in the world . . . which contradicts what was presupposed" (A455/B483). Thus, any appeal to a demand for explanation to establish knowledge of an external ground would equally well establish knowledge of nonexistence, leaving the concept coherent but without any possible theoretical justification.

Note that Kant does not here presume that we have epistemic limits, and "dogmatism" does not here at base refer to a claim transcending such a limit. Rather, rationalism calls *itself* into question. Here each side, whether affirming or denying the external sufficient reason, would be equally guilty of "dogmatic stubbornness, setting its mind rigidly to certain assertions without giving a fair

hearing to the grounds for the opposite" (A407/B434). Thus, Kant supports his conclusion that rationalism can escape the self-contradictions exposed in the first two Antinomies, but only at the cost of dogmatism.⁹

Further, we must take care with the notion of a ground from "outside" of a spatio-temporal regress. The *argument* still would apply to Spinoza. Consider the regress to parts; Spinoza must hold that the ultimate ground of this is substance, since it is the ultimate ground of everything. But substance cannot be thought of as a really big whole composed of parts. Nor can it be thought of as an infinite conjunction of ever larger and larger wholes—turtles all the way up, as it were. For Spinoza is clear that God or substance must not have parts, lest it be dependent: substance cannot be divided (E1P12); it is infinite and so indivisible (E1P13). Substance is, in this sense, a ground from outside the regress. As a result, Spinoza opens up space for the kind of worry, pressed by the Antithesis of the Fourth Antinomy, that there would be an explanatory gap between the infinite substance and the finite; as Spinoza says, in grappling with this problem, "whatever follows from the absolute nature of an attribute of God is eternal and infinite" (E1P28D).

The most likely rationalist rejoinder to the general difficulty here would be to say that a being outside of time, for example, could be a reason for an event at a specific time, even if we cannot comprehend how. And familiar rationalist thoughts about a divine mind might seem to help here: this might be a mind that need not follow a regress one step at a time, but could grasp an infinite series immediately in connection to a sufficient reason beyond it. Leibniz says, for example, "there is always, underneath, a reason . . . even if it is perfectly understood only by God, who alone goes through an infinite series in one act of the mind."¹⁰

And Kant allows that we can have some understanding of the divine intellect appealed to by rationalists, at least by contrast with our own. This is one central feature of what Kant sometimes calls "intellectual intuition." The key here is two senses of immediacy. First, such a higher intellect would not share the need of our understanding for the mediation of intuition from sensibility, with its pure forms of space and time. Second, and consequently, it would not need to build stepwise up through parts to a grasp of everything. So "intellectual intuition," Kant says, "would grasp and present the object immediately and all at once" (TP 8:389). What matters for our purposes is specifically the idea of an intellect enjoying these senses of immediacy; as in §3.3, it will not matter whether such an intellect might also be itself anything like a cause of

⁹ I take it that there is no contentious epistemology here, in that no metaphysician would find it unproblematic if her argument supported equally well the denial of her conclusion.

¹⁰ Leibniz (1989, 303).

the world, or God in that sense, even if Kant also sometimes connects this conception of a higher intellect.¹¹ And Kant agrees that external grounds for a spatio-temporal regress would have to be objects of such an intellect.¹²

But none of this blunts the power of Kant's dogmatism charge. We can think of this in terms of a distinction between two versions of the PSR:

PSR-strong: Everything must have a sufficient reason that is knowable and comprehensible by us.

PSR-weak: Everything must have a sufficient reason.

Granted, PSR-weak would not cut against the rationalist rejoinder that there is an external ground, even if we cannot understand how. But PSR-weak is not strong enough for the initial rationalist argument, for it would open this kind of rejoinder: if we cannot comprehend God because we cannot comprehend infinity, then we also cannot rule out "only infinite turtles," as, for example, in the case of an infinite regress of contingent conditions; this infinity of contingency might itself be a perfectly sufficient reason in some manner that we cannot comprehend, without need of any God. So PSR-weak is not strong enough to demonstrate the rationalist conclusion; PSR-strong can do so, but only at the cost of equally well ruling out the rationalist conclusion.

We can already see here Kant's case that an anti-rationalist denial of the possibility of an unconditioned ground would be equally dogmatic: An argument against the existence of an ultimate reason outside of space and time cannot just be empirical, since it is unsurprising that such a thing does not show up in space and time. So it would have to argue something along these lines: a reason outside of space and time could not ground the specific spatio-temporal features of things. But this appeals to a principle disallowing such gaps in explanation. And since this principle demands that there be reasons, it can equally well support rationalism. So this denial is equally dogmatic. For example:

if empiricism itself becomes dogmatic in regard to the ideas (as frequently happens), and boldly denies whatever lies beyond the sphere of its intuitive cognitions, then it itself makes the same mistake of immodesty. (A471/B499)

¹¹ Contrast Förster's (2002, 2012) case for the importance, in understanding Hegel, of distinctions between Kant's different concepts, and different features of them, and Gram (1981) on how these concepts come apart. There may well be tensions in Kant, but I argue that these complexities are less important for Kant's actual argument, and Hegel's rejoinder, than the simple idea of an intellect capable of grasping reality *immediately and all at once*. See also §3.3.

¹² See, e.g., Kant on Leibnizian monads at A277/B333.

Note that this is another respect in which the target of the Dialectic attack on dogmatism is broader than those who posit otherworldly forms of the unconditioned; the target includes those who deny the existence of the unconditioned; for the target is defined by all such use of a principle demanding explanations or reasons.

There is, of course, much more than this to the Dialectic critique of rationalism. For example, Kant attributes to reason three “ideas” of the unconditioned, corresponding to the branches of rationalist “special metaphysics”: the ideas of the world, of God, and of the self. I have focused here on Kant’s discussion of the idea of the world, in the Antinomy. This case is supposed to be distinctive compared to the other two: it is what allows “proving indirectly the transcendental ideality of appearances” (A506/B534), because this conclusion is part of what is supposed to be required to resolve the contradiction; and only the cosmological idea of the world is supposed to contain such a contradiction, while the ideas of God and the soul are supposed to remain coherent objects of belief or faith (e.g., A673/B701). For Hegel, the general terminological connection of “idea” with reason and the unconditioned will be important. But Hegel will argue for a different understanding of antinomies, on which they arise also in the cases of the soul, God, and quite generally. In any case, we need not wade further into the argument against rationalism, beyond its broad target and the way that the Antinomy argues without need of epistemological premises about limits of our knowledge.

4.2 Skeptical Hopelessness and the Inescapability of the Unconditioned

The Transcendental Dialectic argues that everyone faces an inescapable problem concerning the completeness of reasons, for Kant aims to show that this problem forces everyone (not just rationalists) to accept his own radical solution. But one might worry about this ambition, insofar as there seem to be other options than dogmatically asserting or denying the existence the unconditioned; in particular, one could simply maintain in a deflationary spirit that one need not do either because the very notion is a matter of indifference, or too ill-defined to be worth fighting over, incoherent, or the like.

Kant himself seems skeptical about the very possibility of such indifferentism. For example, in the Antinomy section Kant says that “it is not feasible . . . for reason to withdraw and look upon the quarrel with indifference” (A464/B492). The Antinomies never concern “an arbitrary question that one might raise only at one’s option, but one that every human reason must necessarily come up against” (A422/B449). But it would be hard to argue by consideration

of every possible kind of claim to indifference. So a great deal of the weight of Kant's position falls on his claim that reason's demand for the unconditioned plays an irreplaceable guiding role in all theoretical inquiry. If so, then demonstrating that pursuit of the unconditioned is merely indifferent would be demonstrating that all theoretical inquiry or demonstrations are pointless. So the result of indifferentism would be what my guiding passage, in the epigraph above, characterizes as "skeptical hopelessness" and even the "euthanasia of pure reason" (A407/B434).

And Kant's irreplaceable guidance claim can seem vulnerable in retrospect. We are supposed to require a form of guidance that produces, in a manner akin to an optical illusion (A297/B354), an inevitable temptation to a rationalist conclusion that we nonetheless should not draw. But consider, for example, Walsh's response to Kant:

The illusion of which he speaks was perhaps "natural and inevitable" to a thinker with Kant's background in rationalist metaphysics, but would be less dangerous for, say, a scientifically-minded positivist. (1975, 173)¹³

So Kant's irreplaceability claim can seem to stem from outdated prejudice, without support from philosophical argument that considers the actual pursuit of natural science. It is thus important for us to wade into the issue at least far enough to see that there are some reasons for Kant's position insofar as it contrasts with the sort of deflationary view suggested here. And the key text in this regard will be the case in the "Appendix" to the *Transcendental Dialectic*, which argues that reason's concern with the unconditioned plays an irreplaceable role in scientific inquiry.

It is worth carefully framing the question at issue here. It is important that Kant is not arguing that we should actually engage in the work of trying to provide theoretical justification for answers to metaphysical disputes. Rather, recognizing the irreplaceable guidance and so the avoidable interest of the idea of the unconditioned is supposed to be an important part of the best defense against becoming unwittingly entangled in such metaphysical pursuits. Even so, Kant's claim can still seem as if it must be some kind of step closer to rationalist metaphysics, even if not all the way there. But this is to neglect the structure of philosophical debates noted above: Rationalism is inflationary optimism about reason, holding that reason is concerned with the unconditioned, and that we can know that there is such a thing. Indifferentism

¹³ Cf. Allison's (2004, 330) use of the quote and different response.

would be the deflationary view about reason, holding that reason and scientific inquiry seek only knowledge of conditioned objects. From Kant's perspective, it is this deflationism that is all too close to rationalism: Both are naïvely optimistic in holding that we can have the knowledge of ultimate interest to reason. Kant's rejection of indifferentist deflationism is not a step toward rationalism, but a step away from both, toward the inflationary pessimism holding that reason requires a critique, to reveal that it guides by means of something of which we cannot have knowledge. Compare: Hard determinists will not see their view as a step toward or accommodation with libertarianism, even though both agree on incompatibilism; hard determinists will see compatibilism as all too similar to libertarianism, in seeing both as going awry in trying to preserve the naïvely optimistic claim that we have free will.

So we are not looking for reasons in support of any step toward rationalist metaphysics. We are looking for the reasons for the irreplaceable guidance claim specifically. Kant's own discussions here tend to compress together a great number of issues, and there are three ways in which we can benefit by simplifying our focus. First, Kant argues both that reason's guidance is irreplaceably needed in all theoretical inquiry, as for example in the natural sciences, and that it is irreplaceable in any use of our theoretical faculties at all. It is enough for our purposes to focus on the former claim and the case of scientific inquiry. For it is enough, in answering the kind of concern raised by Walsh, to see reasons for thinking that even scientific inquiry requires such guidance. Second, we can abstract from many of the specifics concerning what Kant has to say about ideas of the unconditioned. This is, in part, because Hegel will contest many of these specifics; what we seek is Kant's case for the inescapability of the general topic. So we can focus on Kant's case for the irreplaceable benefit of the guiding conception of a reason, condition, or ground that is more complete than either a last turtle (as, for example, in the case of smallest simple parts) or infinite turtles (as, for example, an infinite descent of composition all the way down). For this notion of greater completeness is enough to generate the difficulty of the Antinomy: it is what rules out, for example, both simple parts and the lack of simple parts. Third, Kant's discussions often proceed directly to the unconditioned; here I will simplify by proceeding in two distinct steps:

- (i) Theoretical inquiry requires at least the guiding goal that we seek to explain by seeking underlying conditions or reasons.
- (ii) Theoretical inquiry requires the guiding goal that we seek the unconditioned or complete reasons.

Step (i) is crucial, because we must begin with clarity about why any guidance having anything to do with conditions or reasons should be required at

all. First, what is the notion of a condition playing a role in Kant's account of reason? The position I have been defending is that a condition is anything to which one can legitimately appeal in answering an explanatory why-question,¹⁴ which is just how I have defined the notion of a reason in the world. I think it is difficult to see why guidance should be required, because we so easily assume that the only such guidance is provided simply by the goals of finding truth and avoiding error. But once we consider this assumption specifically as an account of rational guidance, it is easy to see that this cannot be the whole story. Think first of the goal of avoiding false beliefs. If given only that goal, a perfectly rational strategy would be to seek to hold as few beliefs as possible. And that does not itself seem any way of pursuing theoretical inquiry at all.

Adding a demand to discover truth does not help, for it would encourage just as well, if not better, the pursuit of trivial truths. For example, on discovering that p is true, we could go on to believe every logical implication, no matter how trivial, beginning with " p or Big Ben is one foot tall," and so on. The problem is that, in pointing us in infinitely many directions, this goal fails to guide in any coherent fashion, and specifically fails to guide us away from the trivial and toward anything contrasting. The same would apply to knowledge as a goal, or justification, for the same reasons. The goal of avoiding logical contradictions also cannot be the whole story of rational guidance; one might seek this by trying to hold fewer beliefs, and it is anyway too indiscriminate to point us toward a nontrivial extension of our knowledge. With respect to reason, avoiding contradiction

constitutes no part of its interest but is instead the condition of having reason at all; only its extension, not mere consistency with itself, is reckoned as its interest. (KprV 5:120)

Consider in this light a thought experiment. Recall Molière's Argan, with his talk of a dormitive virtue. Imagine a similar character, Mr. Incurious. He is self-satisfied in that he is entirely content to make lists of the truths most easily accessible to him. And he is blind to the possibility that there could possibly be something more important that would elude his first glance or consideration. And so he proceeds to list the truths most immediately apparent: there is a cup on his counter; it contains 2.4 centimeters of liquid; this liquid is clear; the first word on the open page of the book on the counter is "eyesight"; and so on. This is distinct from and easier than the path of serious scientific inquiry, even if Mr. Incurious might make a case that he is discovering more truths, more quickly. Actual scientific inquiry is appropriately oriented toward truths that

¹⁴ For more on this view, see Proops (2010, 455).

are less trivial.¹⁵ If so, then there must be some guiding goal of inquiry that is better served in the latter case, so that an account of that more substantial goal would provide an account of what the triviality of the former case consists in.

Kant's view does offer an account of such guidance: reason guides us by demanding that we seek the conditions in terms of which we can explain (and, although I abstract from this for the moment, ultimately explain completely). So Mr. Incurious is amassing truths that are trivial insofar as they do not serve to condition much else, as compared to the truth that a scientist might seek, for example, concerning underlying laws or powers. Consider Kant's own example, in the Appendix to the Dialectic account of the need of natural science for reason's guidance. In observing the roughly circular movements of the planets, "we find variations." But scientific inquiry cannot just rest content with noting the truth about this orbit shape, that orbit shape, and so on. Rather, "[r]eason . . . seeks the unity of these cognitions." In particular, reason demands that we seek this unity in the "properties and powers of things." And reason suggests supposing that there is here an underlying simple kind (*Gattung*) obeying a simple law of force, and reason's principles direct us to seek to account for other phenomena in these same terms:

under the guidance of those principles we come to a unity of genera [*Gattungen*] in the forms of these paths, but thereby also further to unity in the cause of all the laws of this motion (gravitation); from there we extend our conquests, seeking to explain all variations and apparent deviations from those rules on the basis of the same principle. (A662–63/B690–91)

Under reason's guidance, then, we seek the laws. Part of the point is that scientific inquiry seeks truths that are less trivial insofar as they have greater explanatory relevance, specifically insofar as they concern the laws "according to" which the planets move, or a "cause" of various general patterns, or something similar.¹⁶

Walsh's positivist might see Kant's position here as just the prejudice of someone used to metaphysical rationalism; but what then would his alternative be, given that truth is too indiscriminate to serve as a guiding goal? The likely alternative for the positivist will be that scientific inquiry seeks universal generalizations. For discovery of such generalizations would allow scientific explanation in accordance with the positivist covering law model.

¹⁵ See DePaul (2001, 173) on this kind of thought experiment in contemporary epistemology.

¹⁶ On the necessary role of reason's interests in guiding inquiry, see especially Grier (2001, chapter 8). And with an emphasis in its role in guiding pursuit of laws in particular, see Allison (2004, 425ff.).

At this point, many of the debates from chapter 2 would repeat themselves, concerning the worry that appeal to universal generalizations does not explain. So we have already seen good reason to reject such views.

Some might worry that my discussion here ignores the possibility of rejecting step (i) not on the positivist grounds noted by Walsh, but on grounds of a pragmatism. For a pragmatist might indeed think that the goal of inquiry is to make discoveries useful relative to our practical interests, claiming that Mr. Incurious's procedure is trivial because it is so unlikely to be of any practical use. But the only such pragmatism that would conflict with the Kantian point at issue here would be the extreme view that the *only* goals of inquiry are such practical goals, or that there are no guiding goals of *theoretical* reason as such. One might argue that Kant's position has an advantage over that extreme view for this reason: There does seem to be purely theoretical inquiry, which does seem capable of interesting us prior to any way of appreciating how it might have practical benefits. In any case, getting the practical upshot of pragmatism does not require the extreme view. For a less extreme pragmatist could cede to Kant the claim that theoretical reason takes an interest in conditions, but then add an argument that, in any case of tension with our practical interests, practical aims always trump or have primacy over the theoretical aim. The practical upshot would be the same as the extreme view that contradicts (i), so it is hard to see how pragmatism itself could motivate the extreme view. What motivates the denial of step (i) would be the addition of something more like the deflationary view of Walsh's "scientifically-minded positivist."

My use of step (i) is limited to guidance irreplaceable for theoretical inquiry. Kant does aim to go further in arguing that guidance by the goal of conditions (and ultimately the unconditioned) is necessary for any "coherent use" of our theoretical faculties at all. One line of argument here is that only guidance by reason's goals makes possible the formation of empirical concepts. Here the point seems to be that, if there were only different personal projects, like Mr. Incurious's, then there would be no overall unified project of trying to delineate kinds, and forming concepts for these. Reason's goals, however, guide concept formation in a uniform manner, toward ways of classifying that are of explanatory import. So Kant argues:

sameness of kind is necessarily presupposed in the manifold of a possible experience . . . because without it no empirical concepts . . . would be possible. (A654/B682)¹⁷

¹⁷ See esp. Ginsborg on Kant's later arguments that guidance from teleological judgment is necessary to empirical concept formation (1990, 190), and Allison's use of this line of thought in interpreting Kant's earlier account of reason (2004, 433ff.).

Another claim Kant makes is that the guidance of reason is necessary if we are to be able to distinguish empirical truth:

the law of reason to seek unity is necessary, since without it we would have no reason, and without that, no coherent use of the understanding, and, lacking that, no sufficient mark of empirical truth. (A651/B679)

But these further points generate many complexities concerning the precise status of reason's principles, and I will not rely on them here.¹⁸

For our purposes, then, the important point is this: Contra Walsh, Kant's position here is not just a scientifically outdated prejudice of someone influenced by rationalism; there are reasons for thinking that theoretical inquiry requires a guiding interest of reason in a goal more discriminating than truth or knowledge, and specifically at least the goal of discovering underlying conditions that would make explanations possible. If so, then a view denying all existence of underlying conditions, or even just a view arguing that the very idea is meaningless or a matter of indifference, would amount to a skeptical hopelessness about theoretical inquiry. An objection to this last point might be this: it is coherent to deny that there are any conditions to be found while yet also holding that inquiry seeking conditions provides a payoff that is valuable in some other respect. But the response is that, if so, then theoretical inquiry could in principle be guided by the goal of that other value or payoff. But that is not possible if Kant is correct that there is an irreplaceable guiding role for reason's interest in conditions.

And now we are ready to move on to the next step:

- (ii) Theoretical inquiry requires the guiding goal that we seek the unconditioned.

Kant's argument from conditions to the unconditioned is this: Our dissatisfaction with knowledge of something conditioned will persist if we learn of an underlying condition that is again merely conditioned. In Kant's terms, if we find an underlying condition that is a rule, then

since this rule is once again exposed to this same attempt of reason, and the condition of its condition thereby has to be sought . . . we see very well that the proper principle of reason in general (in its logical

¹⁸ On the further difficulties, see, e.g., Grier (2001, 11) and Allison (2004, 424).

use) is to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed. (A307/B364)

This argument seems vulnerable, and the best way to see its force is to consider initially appealing objections. A first objection is this: There is no need for any interest in the unconditioned here, because we can instead hold that reason's demand is that we find, *for each* conditioned thing, *its* underlying condition. So we were initially dissatisfied insofar as we lacked knowledge of the underlying condition of *X*. That dissatisfaction has been resolved on discovering its condition, *Y*. But then we might encounter a different dissatisfaction insofar as we are lacking knowledge of the underlying condition of *Y*, and so on. At no point need we take an interest in any kind of completeness or unconditioned.

But compare a practical case: Imagine you face a series of iterated prisoner's dilemma games with one opponent. A natural for-each account would propose that, for each play, you should make the move that maximizes your expected outcome in that round, regardless of any other rounds. But this does not seem a good strategy overall. Even in such simplified thought experiments it seems rational to think in terms of an overall guiding goal rather than a for-each demand.

An analogue concerning theoretical reasons: Molière's Argan might appeal to a circle of powers, so that *for each* power there would be a ground in another. Perhaps he will say that opium has a dormitive virtue owing to our disposition to fall asleep on ingestion of opium, and explain our disposition in terms of the dormitive virtue. Argan's original answer seems laughable because he is blind to the right direction of inquiry and the reason to proceed in that direction. His new answer satisfies a for-each demand, but is equally blind to the direction required for theoretical inquiry. So there must be such an overall (rather than just for-each) direction, and the challenge is to explain this.

The objector might complain that the problem here is only the small size of the circle, so that if Argan could have produced a circle of powers among ten elements he would be doing better. But this is to recognize that there is an overriding goal, and to backslide into taking the goal to be amassing more truths. But we have already seen that the problem with this approach is that it cannot discriminate trivial truths, and in this way direct inquiry toward the nontrivial.

Kant's account is superior here. With respect to natural science specifically, Kant holds that this must seek to explain more completely than would any such circle of distinct powers; it must seek underlying conditions allowing more complete explanation of all of those powers. More specifically, it seeks the simplest system of natural kinds and laws that can explain in a unified fashion the

greatest diversity of phenomena—or a “systematic unity of nature.”¹⁹ Thus, it would never be rational for science to find any final or definitive satisfaction in an answer like Argan’s.

Another objector might propose the goal of reducing the number of known phenomena for which we know of no explanations. But this too we might seek by seeking to avoid learning about any phenomena at all, thus avoiding raising unanswered explanatory questions. And that hardly seems a form of theoretical inquiry. Again, it turns out that there are reasons for thinking that an irreplaceable guiding role in theoretical inquiry is played by the notion of the unconditioned, at least in the sense of the notion of some thing that would provide explanation more complete than a last turtle or infinite turtles. Contra Walsh, this is not just a prejudice in favor of the rationalism that Kant is in fact critiquing here.

If Kant is right about this, then dismissals of the very idea of the unconditioned, even just in the sense of reasons or conditions more complete than last turtle or infinite turtles, would be a form of skeptical hopelessness about inquiry. Imagine we took ourselves to have justification to dismiss the very idea of completeness of explanation in the form of a systematic unity of nature. But then it would be irrational to seek such a system of forces, laws, and kinds in nature:

For then reason would proceed directly contrary to its vocation, since it would set as its goal an idea that entirely contradicts the arrangement of nature. (A651/B679)²⁰

If the idea of such completeness of conditions and so of explanation is irreplaceably required as a guide for all theoretical inquiry, then taking that idea to be a matter of indifference would be at least a denial of the rationality of scientific inquiry, and theoretical inquiry generally.

4.3 Kant’s Radical Resolution: Epistemic Restriction

We can now easily appreciate why Kant thinks that the Dialectic presents an inescapable difficulty for everyone, rather than just rationalists. Assuming that we do pursue theoretical inquiry, as, for example, in the case of natural science, reason must make seeking the unconditioned, and so thinking about

¹⁹ A619/B647. See Kitcher (1986, 209) and Guyer (1990, 23–27).

²⁰ Kant’s claim here is stronger than needed for present purposes, and I bracket complexities this raises, about which see Grier (2001, 126) and Allison (2004, xvii, 330, and 435–38).

it, unavoidable. But all of the immediately apparent positions on the topic are unacceptable: rationalist affirmation, and anti-rationalist denial, and indifferentism all lead to a dogmatism or a skepticism that are, either way, “the death of a healthy philosophy” (A407/B433–34).

Kant raises this problem of reason in order to argue that there is one acceptable alternative, and only one—something he thinks is new and radical. The alternative is supposed to be “transcendental idealism.” This is the view, the Antinomy specifies, that space and time and the objects of our experience (“appearances”) are not things as they are in themselves, and that we cannot know things as they are in themselves (A491/B519). So the Antinomy makes the contribution of “proving indirectly the transcendental ideality of appearances” (A506/B534). But the meaning of the distinction between appearances and things in themselves is extremely controversial. And I think that Hegel’s rejoinder will be equally powerful given *any* interpretation on the controversial points, so long as it is consistent with the clear outlines of Kant’s account of reason. So I focus on the Kantian restriction of our knowledge as *part* of this larger package, which can be formulated independently of interpretations of claims about things in themselves: our knowledge is limited by the bounds of sensibility, delimited by the forms of our sensible intuition, space and time.

More discussion of the whole package of transcendental idealism would be necessary to further examine one sense in which the Antinomy is supposed to present a problem for everyone, and not just rationalists. For the irreplaceable guidance claim shows that everyone must think of the unconditioned (in order to seek it), regardless of whether one asserts its existence. But the Antinomy threatens to render the very thought incoherent. And Kant would like to argue that only the transcendental distinction can save room for the thought, without contradiction (Bxx–xxi). But for the reasons above I will not evaluate this line of argument further.

The crucial issue here will be how Kant’s restriction of knowledge resolves the problem of reason, concerning skeptical hopelessness and dogmatism. In short, given the restriction, Kant can recognize the inescapability of direct questions about the unconditioned. And he can offer a philosophical reply, in contrast to indifferentism—yet without getting dragged into anything like the answers given by rationalists and anti-rationalists. He can reply with a philosophical explanation of why we can never know the answers. This reply is not just ad hoc; he offers what is supposed to be a satisfying and principled explanation of the limit or restriction.²¹ The proposed explanation is, in short: First, to expand our knowledge we must go beyond merely reflecting on our concepts;

²¹ On the philosophical need for a principled limit, I am influenced by Della Rocca’s (2010) defense of the PSR.

analytic judgments cannot amplify our cognition (e.g., A7–8/B12), and synthetic judgments “are possible only by the relating of a given concept to an intuition” (C 11:39). Second, we have access to intuition only where this is provided by sensibility (e.g., B135; P 4:288). Third, the *a priori* forms of our sensibility are space and time. The conclusion is that we can extend our knowledge only with respect to objects for within the bounds of sensibility, delimited by the forms of space and time.²²

True, there are many complexities about Kant’s epistemic concepts, like “cognition” (*Erkenntnis*), “knowledge” (*Wissen*), belief or faith (*Glauben*), and so on. And there is a “warrant of pure reason in its practical use to an extension” (KprV 5:50). Fans of metaphysics might take charity to recommend looking to these complexities in search of a less restrictive Kant. But I set that kind of charity aside, in favor of reading all this in context of the organizing goals of the critical philosophy. A very central goal is to criticize rationalist metaphysics as dogmatic. And Kant does not limit himself to criticizing only places where rationalists use the words *Erkenntnis* or *Wissen*, or similar, as if rationalists might have slightly tweaked their epistemic categories and avoided the whole problem with dogmatism. The dogmatism of rationalism requires only writing in one’s philosophy that, to formulate an example, ‘there is a complete ground for the regress to smaller parts in space’ (at least when written without modification of a claim like ‘reason requires us to assume for the sake of inquiry that . . .’). And this broad target is easy to understand in light of what Kant says. For example:

no concept can its objective reality be secured, save insofar as it can be presented in a corresponding intuition (which for us is always sensory), so that beyond the bounds of sensibility and thus of possible experience, there can be no cognition whatever, that is, no concepts of which one is sure that they are not empty. (UE 8:188–89)

And, if I cannot “cognize an object,” then I can still “think whatever I like, as long as I do not contradict myself . . . even if I cannot give any assurance whether or not there is a corresponding object” (Bxxvi n.). In short, we cannot have cognition of an object for a concept if there cannot be corresponding sensory intuition. This deprives philosophy of any kind of epistemic justification for taking there to be any object corresponding to the concept. And this rules out the legitimacy of nontrivial assertions about it in any

²² This allows synthetic *a priori* knowledge in cases concerning the conditions of the possibility of experience, made possible by corresponding *a priori* intuition of the forms of our sensibility. See Allison (2004, 225–28).

theoretical context, such as rationalist writings or Kant's response to them. I think that my calling this Kant's restriction of "knowledge" is, if anything, safely understating its bite; and, in any case, *Hegel's* Kant is certainly that restrictive.

Another complexity is this: Kant allows us to draw inferences, as, for example, in scientific inquiry, about objects that our senses cannot detect, but which explain our observations. The rationalist might want to exploit this to argue for the existence of ultimately unconditioned explainers. So Kant must hold that we can infer to knowledge of unobservables only when they are such as could in principle be given in sensible intuition, even if other details about our sense organs prevent us from sensing them. So Kant's restriction allows knowledge of only an object such that

in accordance with the laws of sensibility and the context of our perceptions, we could also happen upon the immediate empirical intuition of it in an experience if our senses, the crudeness of which does not affect the form of possible experience in general, were finer.
(A226/B273)

In sum:

Kant's restriction: We can have knowledge of objects only within the bounds of sensibility, i.e., where there could in principle be "corresponding intuition," in accordance with the forms of space and time.

This is what will preclude knowledge of anything unconditioned or any complete explainer; for example, "in sensibility, i.e., in space and time, every condition to which we can attain in the exposition of given appearances is in turn conditioned" (A508/B536).

Precisely this limitation of knowledge is what will allow Kant to hold that there is always room for reason's ideas to play their required guiding role, making possible that science should progress "asymptotically" (A663/B691), finding ever more fundamental natural forces, kinds, and laws—even if we cannot ever reach the limit. Given the restriction, there is no threat that rationalist metaphysics will answer more directly questions about ultimate explanations of things, rendering natural scientific research obsolete. Nor is there threat that any non-rationalist philosophy can establish the nonexistence, or indifference, of the very idea of the unconditioned, thus showing scientific research to be pointless. Also crucial for Kant is the similar way in which his restriction safeguards the space for reason's ideas to play a practical role (Bxxv ff.).

This Dialectic argument can help us to see one solution to a pressing problem concerning the very idea of a restriction in knowledge. For such a restriction claim clearly cannot only mean that, if there were anything satisfying the concept that-of-which-we-cannot-have-knowledge, then this would be something of which we cannot have knowledge. For that is trivial. The Dialectic explains one kind of surprising and powerful solution Kant has for this problem. Kant's conclusion here is that our sensible intuition is limiting insofar as it precludes reaching the guiding goal that we ourselves do and must seek in all theoretical inquiry. In terms drawn from the B-preface gloss on the argument of the Dialectic:

That which necessarily drives us to go beyond the boundaries of experience and all appearances is the unconditioned, which reason necessarily and with every right demands. (Bxx)

We are limited in that we ourselves must seek, and do seek “with every right,” something of which we could never have knowledge.

There are several interpretive worries for which I should at least briefly note my response. First, some might worry that I have not resolved all of the mysteries about the results of the Dialectic, and have left as mysterious as ever Kant's claims about the unknowability of things in themselves. Here the additional problem is that Kant's formulation of the limit often seems to assert the existence of things in themselves.²³ I would hope that a solution to the puzzles would be found further along the path we are already traveling.²⁴ But here it will have to be enough that, although I have not done anything to resolve the famous difficulties concerning things in themselves, I also have not made this perennial problem any worse than it already was.

Second, one might worry that I have left out the third *Critique* account of the guidance of scientific inquiry. But here it is enough that the critical Kant consistently maintains, from discussions of the guiding role of reason's regulative principles in the first *Critique* to discussions of reflective teleological judgments in the third, that we need a kind of guidance such that we can never have theoretical knowledge of whether our guiding goal is met.²⁵

Third, some might argue that Kant's considered theory of reason is more deflationary. Neiman, for example, reads Kant as opposing a “reification” of the ideas of reason, or opposing “our tendency to disparage the power of ideas without objects,” by defending a “noncognitive account of the notion of reason.” On

²³ For example, Bxxvi; A249–52; P 4:314–15; and see Langton (1998, 22–23) on these.

²⁴ See the proposal of Kreines (unpublished), meant to fall between Franks (2005, 46) and Warren (2001, 54).

²⁵ On the development of Kant's views here, see especially Guyer (1990).

this reading, it would be a mistake to even conceive of *objects* of reason, or of the unconditioned as any kind of object. Neiman explains Kant's departures from that rule by saying that he is misled by a residual worry that his non-cognitivism "leaves the ideas without sufficient or certain foundation" (1994, 99–100). But inflationism about the aim of reason is an essential part of the endeavor to demonstrate the epistemically pessimistic conclusion that our knowledge is restricted relative to the aim of reason. A non-cognitivist deflationism would support the optimistic conclusion that there is no concern of reason that our knowledge cannot meet.

The same would be true if Kant's aim is to show that the whole idea of unconditioned objects is an "illusion." As Grier (2001) has emphasized, the point of connecting the ideas of the unconditioned with "illusion" is not to reject the ideas or to learn to stop taking an interest in unconditioned objects; rather, the point is to learn to avoid being deceived into drawing conclusions beyond our limits by reason's indispensably necessary interest in the unconditioned, so that "illusion (which can be prevented from deceiving) is nevertheless indispensably necessary" (A645/B673).

Finally, when it comes to metaphysics, it is easy to see the substantial bite in Kant's restriction. Recall that reason gives rise to "endless controversies" on "the battlefield . . . called metaphysics" (Aviii). If reason is responsible, then these are controversies about the unconditioned. The Dialectic arguments support the conclusion that metaphysics, in this sense of most immediate rational interest to reason, is impossible for us: we cannot legitimately assert knowledge of any conclusion about this topic. Such metaphysics—the metaphysics of reason—stems from a rational, legitimate, an ineliminable interest in the unconditioned or complete reasons; and we must not give in to the self-deception of denying that we, as rational, are concerned with metaphysics in this sense; rather, we must keep in mind that inescapable interest, precisely in order to guard against mistakenly thinking that we can ever attain theoretical knowledge that would satisfy it. But Kant does not express these points as a claim to end metaphysics, because he also aims to transform metaphysics into an enterprise within which we can make progress within our limits. Thus, the negative point about our limit is supposed to pay positive dividends; as the B-Preface puts the point:

the concern of this critique of pure speculative reason consists in that attempt to transform the accepted procedure of metaphysics, undertaking an entire revolution . . . (Bxxii)

But this is to defend the impossibility, for us, of what I have called "the metaphysics of reason," and so the sense of "metaphysics" centrally at issue here.

The Opening for Hegel's Response to Kant's Dialectic

We will always return to metaphysics as to a beloved from whom we
have been estranged.

—Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A850/B878

It is widely agreed that Hegel claims to find considerations internal to Kant's critical philosophy and to show that these in fact support Hegel's own views over Kant's.¹ As noted in §0.5, many who see Hegel as pursuing a metaphysical project forbidden by Kant find that Hegel fails at internal engagement and merely assumes the possibility of the sort of metaphysics that Kant argues against. Others think that this would be so obviously question-begging that Hegel must rather be pursuing and radicalizing the kind of positive project Kant allows and pursues himself in the *Transcendental Analytic*—something like a consideration of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge, or of intentionality, and so on. But these opposing views, and others as well, agree that internal engagement with Kant would have to mean internal engagement with Kantian epistemology, or a kind of broadly epistemology-first critique of previous metaphysics.²

And we can now see that a different path is open to Hegel, and that he takes it. In short, Hegel treats different lines of argument differently. It is specifically Kant's *Dialectic* critique of metaphysics that Hegel takes so seriously. And he is right to do so, as the argument definitely threatens his and any project in the metaphysics of reason, regardless of whether this involves positing transcendent or otherworldly entities (§5.1). Once we understand why Hegel takes the

¹ See Beiser (1995) on this wide agreement.

² See the notes in §0.5.

Dialectic so seriously, we can also understand why he takes less seriously the idea of a Kantian version of a purely epistemology-first criticism of metaphysics. This sort of argument, *if meant to stand without support from the Dialectic*, Hegel dismisses without internal engagement, and (I argue) with strong reasons (§5.2). This brings us back to the central problem emphasized by the Dialectic: responding to reason's interest in the unconditioned in a principled manner that avoids indifferentism and dogmatism. The more recent development of philosophy still gives us reason to agree about the centrality this problem (§5.3). And thinking in terms of this problem can help us to understand the potential opening for Hegel's ambitious attempt to show that attention to the conflicts uncovered by Kant in the Dialectic better support a different alternative to indifferentism and dogmatism: one that takes the form not of an epistemic restriction but rather an ambitious, constructive metaphysics of reason (§5.4).

5.1 Hegel on the Importance of the Dialectic Critique of Metaphysics

Hegel's estimation of the great importance of Kant's Transcendental Dialectic critique of metaphysics is easy to see. His comments on the topic generally emphasize a complex position. In the Introduction to the WL, he puts the point in this way: on the one hand, there is something negative about the Kantian turn in philosophy, which makes it appear to be a retrograde step in philosophy; but this is only an appearance, because the "foundation" or "basis" of the Kantian turn is correct and advances philosophy beyond pre-critical metaphysics in a way that should not be simply undone, bypassed, or forgotten. The reason this step forward appears retrograde is that it gives up on something from prior metaphysics, which Hegel would like to recover; it gives up the claim that the natures of things are such as can be comprehended by rational, conceptual thought:

The older metaphysics had in this respect a higher concept of thinking than now passes as the accepted opinion. . . . This metaphysics thus held that thinking and the determination of thinking are not something alien to the subject matters, but are rather their essence.

But Kant's philosophy is not a retrograde step, because of the importance of its basis or foundation. It is absolutely crucial, then, what basis Hegel specifically indicates. And he does not say what we would expect if we read the *Critique* as epistemology-first. The basis is not anything like the idea of reflecting on the

possibility of cognition of objects, or on a priori concepts or their justification, normative status, or similar. And it is nothing about any of the key steps in Kant's positive project in the *Analytic*.³ Rather, the deeper and important basis to be preserved is clearly and specifically Kant's Dialectic discovery of necessary conflicts:

[T]here is something deeper lying at the foundation of this turn which knowledge takes, and appears as a loss and a retrograde step, something on which the elevation of reason to the loftier spirit of modern philosophy in fact rests. The basis of that conception now universally accepted is to be sought, namely, in the insight into the *necessary conflict* . . . (WL 5:38–39/25–26)⁴

What Hegel proposes, then, is to reinstate what was lost from earlier metaphysics, but on the basis of Kant's necessary conflicts. So Hegel promises to argue that Kant's "insight" can be best "carried through" in a manner that allows metaphysics and, in particular, a metaphysics of reason, even though this means overcoming Kant's restriction. Hegel promises "the elevation of reason above the restrictions of the understanding and the dissolution of them" (WL 5:39/26). In the initial EL discussions of previous philosophical standpoints, Hegel says that pre-Kantian metaphysics "became dogmatism" because it could not deal otherwise with the necessary conflicts (EL §32); and while Kant's claim about necessary conflict is correct, his solution must be replaced (EL §48).⁵

And Hegel is right to see a threat to his own project in Kant's Dialectic, which would threaten any project in the metaphysics of reason. The threat is not limited to views that postulate transcendent or otherworldly entities. Consider, for example, Hegel's view that we can infer, from observed regularities in the behavior of things like the solar system, that the material bodies involved are governed by an immanent concept—the concept of matter in this case (chapter 1). But once we consider this in light of Kant's case for the inescapability of problems about complete reasons, Hegel's inference looks like this: there are these astronomical phenomena; there must be an explanation; thus, etc. But now it looks like this argument is based on a principle demanding explanation or demanding that reality be intelligible. Holding such a principle in a consistent

³ Contrast, for example, accounts in Pippin (1989, chapter 2) and Houlgate (2006, 12f.).

⁴ Hegel will interpret these conflicts differently and thus continues to name the understanding rather than reason; see chapter 6.

⁵ On this split reaction of Hegel's to Kant on necessary conflict, see also Gueroult (1978, 273f.).

manner—without a response to block Kant's worries—would drive one as well to reasons for the laws of nature, and on in this way to a complete reason for everything. It would drive one to precisely the sort of rationalism that (as Hegel himself says) “became dogmatism,” for the reasons uncovered by Kant's Dialectic.

Note that Hegel's taking the Dialectic critique of metaphysics so seriously is entirely compatible with his sharply contrasting outright rejection of empiricist critiques of metaphysics, noted in §2.2. The difference is that these empiricist critiques turn on epistemological premises. Such critiques might begin roughly like this:

- (i) Philosophy should be restricted to appealing only to those things for which we can give an explanation of the possibility of our having knowledge, specifically in terms that take as basic the possibility of knowledge of the objects of sense perception.

But this is not so threatening to Hegel; we saw above that he has arguments for the rejection of such premises from the beginning, and so against the need for internal engagement with this sort of argument, or the need to turn any of its premises to Hegel's purposes.

The same feature that makes the Dialectic more threatening to Hegel, however, also makes it of at least potential use. Consider the Dialectic critique as proceeding roughly through these steps:

- (A1) Reason seeks knowledge of complete explainers or the unconditioned.
- (A2) Reason makes metaphysical questions unavoidable for us, in the sense of questions about the existence and nature of complete explainers or the unconditioned.
- (A3) Consideration of such metaphysical questions brings us inescapably to the internal conflicts uncovered by the Antinomy.
- (A4) Given these conflicts, the only way to avoid both dogmatism and skeptical hopelessness is to conclude that our knowledge is restricted by the bounds of sensibility and can never satisfy reason or resolve metaphysical questions.

What makes this more threatening is that the first three premises are entirely unlike the empiricist argument: the initial premises here involve neither claims about epistemic limits nor about philosophy having to begin with solutions to epistemological problems. But, by the same token, Hegel can hope to use these first three premises in his own metaphysical project. (A1) and (A2) should on the face of it be helpful. The crucial question is whether Hegel can

use (A3), or Kant's "insight into the *necessary conflict*" (WL 5:38–39/25–26) in the construction of a positive metaphysics of reason. If so, then this is not to beg the question against Kant's restriction of knowledge in (A4); it would be to demonstrate that Kant's own basis supports not the restriction, but rather Hegel's metaphysics.

5.2 Hegel's Dismissal of Kantian Epistemology-First Critique

Some may associate with Kant a kind of epistemology-first critique of metaphysics that would not need prior support from the necessary conflicts from the Dialectic. There is here neither space nor need to resolve questions about Kant's own overall view on the relations between his different arguments. Sometimes, as we have seen, Kant seems to agree with the view defended here, namely, that his critique of metaphysics and restriction of knowledge rests on the Dialectic for support. But perhaps he portrays matters otherwise elsewhere, or something else is the best overall interpretation of his overall view. What is important here is rather this: *if* anyone, including Kant, thinks that other Kantian considerations are sufficient to support the restriction and impossibility of the metaphysics of reason, without support of the Dialectic, then Hegel provides excellent reasons for concluding that they are mistaken.

One way of constructing a critique of metaphysics that is Kantian in spirit, but without further support of the Dialectic, would be to begin with premises along these lines:

- (B1) The use of our faculty of cognition to judge about objects raises epistemological problems that must be resolved prior to any legitimate philosophical judgments about objects.
- (B2) So philosophy can only be legitimate if it provides a reflective account of our own cognition and proceeds elsewhere in light of that account of our fitness and limits.

Hegel himself clearly formulates and considers this kind of epistemology-first argument:

It is one of the main viewpoints of the *Critical* philosophy that, prior to setting about to acquire cognition of God, the essence of things, etc., the *faculty of cognition* itself would have to be examined first in order to see whether it is capable of achieving this; that one must first

come to know the *instrument*, before one undertakes the work that is to be produced by means of it. For should the instrument be insufficient, all the effort would then have been expended in vain. (EL §10A; cf. PhG §73–74)

But here Hegel's response will not be to claim to turn the premises to his own purposes; rather, as noted in §0.2, Hegel argues that this epistemology-first argument is based on an error from the beginning. The key to understanding the philosophical force of Hegel's rejection is to note the parallel with the empiricist critiques of metaphysics considered above. This version of "Critical Philosophy" also raises epistemological worries about metaphysics—such as metaphysical claims to "cognition of God, or of the essence of things, etc."—and prioritizes from the beginning a different topic: reflection on our own cognition, or on the conditions of the possibility of our cognizing objects. But if a critical philosophy advances this argument without support from the Dialectic, then it is resting instead on a supposed contrast, whereby some broadly epistemological problem places metaphysics in doubt but never arises similarly in broadly epistemological reflection on our cognition.

The flaw in the argument is hidden by a misleading analogy. We can examine a tool, like a hammer, without yet using it. But cognition cannot be like a tool for which we could examine its use without using it. We would need our cognition to think about our cognition. And if tools should not be used without independent assurances about their fitnesses, then there would be no way to start using cognition at all. So the proposal is similar, as Hegel points out, to demanding that we learn to swim before getting in water (EL §10R).

Of course, someone might argue that we possess another faculty, a meta-cognition, which gives us access to cognition and allows us to draw broadly epistemological conclusions about it. But then the question will be whether meta-cognition is subject to the same epistemological problems that are supposed to delay use of cognition. If it is, then no advance was made on the swimming problem. If not, and meta-cognition is supposed to come with a kind of infallibility, or is not subject to a demand, applied everywhere else, that we account for the fitness for aboutness or knowledge—then that is another matter. In that case, a proponent of metaphysics can with equal right posit a special faculty for metaphysics and claim that it is equally blessed.

As we saw in §0.2, the argument is quite general. It would rebuff a demand for prioritizing consideration of the possibility of knowledge (epistemology in the narrow sense) and similarly to the demand for prioritizing consideration of the possibility of aboutness (semantics). It would apply whether one wanted to prioritize an introspective approach to one of these, to a social approach, to any other approach to them.

Guyer sees in Hegel's rejoinder the "grossly unfair" idea that Kant is appealing to some "empirical, psychological method" (1993, 185). But this is beside the point. If a Guyer-style Kantian merely assumes the possibility of non-empirical knowledge in the case of reflection on our cognition, then a metaphysician can with equal right do the same in the case of metaphysics. Hegel is not arguing against our ability to have any particular kind of knowledge. He is arguing against a kind of sleight of hand that would produce skeptical problems to shift our focus away from metaphysics, but then hide those problems when bringing our focus to rest on something broadly epistemological.

Ameriks has a very different objection, arguing that nothing in Hegel's swimming rejoinder would prevent the argument of the Antinomies in the Dialectic from showing that metaphysics calls itself into question, supporting Kant's conclusions about the need to reflect on our cognition and establish its limits (1985, 18). I agree. But this is good news for Hegel's project: once it is agreed that the matter rests on the Dialectic, the way is clear for a case that considerations from the Dialectic support Hegel's metaphysics instead, without any opening for the common rejoinder that this would beg the question against Kant's restriction of knowledge.

The moral Hegel draws from the swimming rejoinder is clear: such epistemology-first worries provide no reason to conclude that metaphysical topics must be contingent on the results of epistemic reflection. We must rather jump in the water and try to learn to swim—which is to say, to start doing metaphysics, and to try to learn to think well rather than poorly about it. Granted, we saw above that Hegel is *not* advocating a wholesale return to specifically pre-Kantian metaphysical claims about "God . . . the essence of things, etc." Hegel agrees that this was objectionably naïve or uncritical. But we have now seen clearly that Hegel's worry is *not* about it being unacceptably naïve to make such claims without first providing an account of our cognition and its fitness for them. Rather, it is supposed to be unacceptably naïve to pursue metaphysics without noting and responding to "necessary conflict" lurking within it, as revealed by Kant's Transcendental Dialectic; and this is what Hegel proposes to do.⁶

Again, there can be other ways of understanding Kant as proposing an epistemology-first critique of metaphysics. One might begin straight away with the claim that our knowledge is restricted within the bounds of sensibility. But then there is no reason why the metaphysician must accept that claim; she can rather agree with the view that seems present in Kant's own B-Preface,

⁶ There are some complicated issues here concerning whether the earlier *Phenomenology* is similar. Here I will just note that Hegel places a seemingly similar argument about beginning with cognition as instrument in the "Introduction" of the *Phenomenology* (PhG §73).

in discussing the role of the Dialectic, that the restriction needs more support. Proponents of Kantian epistemology-first critique might attempt to address the need with epistemological considerations, along these lines:⁷

- (C1) A divine intellect would be perfect, infallible, and could grasp all reality “immediately and all at once” (TP 8:389).
- (C2) Our intellect is neither perfect, nor infallible, nor grasps reality immediately and all at once.
- (C3) Thus, we have a merely discursive intellect, whose knowledge is limited to the bounds of sensibility, and so on.

This line of critique, however, requires a suppressed premise:

- (C0) There are only two conceivable kinds of intellect: discursive and divine.

But it is characteristic of Hegel to deny such dualistic claims.⁸ Falsifying the suppressed premise requires only conceiving a third kind of in-between intellect. One of many alternatives that seems conceivable would be this common view about our own situation: Imagine an intellect that is neither infallible, perfect, nor grasps the whole of reality immediately and all at once; but imagine that this intellect also exceeds Kant's restriction in that it can draw inferences to what explains its empirical observations, without any special restriction that these explainers must be such that there can be corresponding intuition from sensibility for them, in accordance with space and time as supposed pure forms of our sensibility. You might think we are more restricted than this, but still cede that such an in-between case is at least conceivable. Or compare the way, noted in §3.8, that Hegel's case for natural teleology proposes that our knowledge exceeds Kant's restriction by pure forms of space and time, without this amounting to divine knowledge grasping reality immediately and all at once.

But I should be clear that my aim here is neither to argue that *Kant* lacks justification for his claims about our epistemological limits, nor that *Hegel* finds Kant lacking. For Kant, in fact, has the support of the Dialectic, and Hegel agrees that it is threatening indeed.

Note that this point renders of secondary importance some prominent disputes about Hegel's reading of Kant's epistemological project. For example, Hegel complains that Kant's epistemology leaves our knowledge restricted to

⁷ Allison (2004, 13) finds “implicit in the Critique” a version of this “only two conceivable types” argument.

⁸ See, e.g., EL §75 and Kreines (2007).

mere appearances (e.g., EL §45).⁹ If we read Hegel as aiming to better execute an epistemological project from Kant's Analytic, then it can seem as if Hegel is resting a lot of weight on a possibly question-begging interpretation of Kant, in order to show that Kant executes his own project somehow poorly—insisting that Kant allows knowledge only of “appearances” in the sense of inner, subjective states, for example, whereas it hardly seems clear that this is Kant's point. But once we understand Hegel's focus on the Dialectic, the crucial point about Kantian appearances will be one that is uncontroversially present in Kant: the objects of our knowledge (“appearances”) always fall short of the unconditioned objects of interest to reason.¹⁰ Hegel's basic goal is rather to re-execute Kant's Dialectic account of reason and its objects in a way that overcomes *this* Kantian limitation (EL §45). Perhaps it could still be shown that Hegel portrays Kant's Aesthetic and/or Analytic in a skewed manner, and he certainly could write more precisely about them; but this should not matter to the arguments by which Hegel pursues his core ambition: turning Kant's Dialectic to the purposes of a constructive metaphysics of reason.

5.3 Why the Basic Problem of the Dialectic Remains Inescapable Today

This brings us back to the Dialectic conception of the basic problem of philosophy, discussed in the Introduction above. On this understanding, the basic problem is responding to reason's concern with complete explainers or the unconditioned. And Kant's more specific orientation here is to seek some principled third alternative to the sorts of indifferentism and dogmatism discussed above.

I sketched in §0.5 a preliminary sense of why more recent developments within philosophy remain testament to the importance of the same basic problem. For it is easy to see how to apply the three-term organizing narrative. *First*, in the middle decades of the twentieth century, philosophy came to be dominated by positivists who claimed indifference toward metaphysics. But indifferentism receded from a position of orthodoxy, and for all the reasons we would have predicted from Kant's Dialectic: for instance, positivists claiming indifference to metaphysics tend to have unnoticed metaphysical

⁹ Consider also related issues about whether Kant's categories are merely subjective; see Ameriks (1985) vs. Bristow (2002). The dispute of secondary importance because Ameriks is also right that the weight of the restriction claim at issue between Hegel and Kant rests ultimately not on the Analytic but the Dialectic.

¹⁰ E.g., A508/B536.

commitments, such as the commitment to regularity views about laws (§2.3); and positivists tend to lack the resources, by comparison with Kant's account of reason, to account for the progress of the sciences that is so important to them (§4.2). *Second*, and in response, much of contemporary philosophy has moved in the direction of metaphysics. We can contrast to both a *third* possibility: Kant's alternative. But I only mentioned above that I think more recent metaphysics is vulnerable to Kant's Dialectic critique; I can now say more about why.

Consider Armstrong's (1983) defense of his account of the laws of nature, on which there is a law where universals stand in the relation of necessitation. He repeats (unknowingly, I believe) Hegel's argument that empiricist skepticism is no threat to metaphysics, because taken seriously and in a principled manner it would undercut any serious alternative as well.¹¹ After brushing aside such epistemological worries, Armstrong does briefly notice a different worry, much more closely related to Kant's Dialectic. He admits that a

principle of sufficient reason . . . must therefore enlist the sympathy of anybody who, like myself, looks to an account of laws which treats them as the explanations of regularities. Should we not go further and explain the laws themselves?

The threat is that he will be forced to hold that there is some "Absolute" that explains and renders everything necessary:

if explanation has to stop short of the Absolute . . . [a]t what point should we do this? That is a question of the utmost delicacy for every philosophy. In my judgement, the Regularity theory of law gives up much too soon. . . . [I]s there any hope of demonstrating the necessity of the ultimate connections? I do not believe that there is. (Armstrong 1982, 159)

Armstrong is right about the problem for contemporary metaphysical projects like his own. And note, again, that the threat has nothing to do with other-worldly objects, but with a form of argument. But Armstrong's response is not yet sufficient to the essentially Kantian problem here. Imagine that Armstrong's rejoinder to the Absolute is successful: we should not posit this, because we do not have real reasons for thinking that doing so will provide an actual explanation of anything specifically in these terms, in contrast to the great success

¹¹ If taken seriously, it would force us to a "[s]olipsism of the present moment" (Armstrong 1983, 106).

of natural science at explaining phenomena in terms of laws of nature. But if this kind of rejoinder works, then it should be usable against Armstrong's own account of laws in terms of universals, as opposed to its humean adversaries. Here the success of natural science explaining in terms of laws is not at issue; humeans will agree. The humean can now start from that point of agreement and note that what is at issue is Armstrong's additional insistence on *adding* an account of laws in terms of universals. The humean will argue that *this* is not something for which any natural science has found any role. So then it would be just as good a candidate for elimination. Armstrong needs to rest on a philosophical case that explanatory appeals to laws implicitly require commitment to his universals; but then he remains open to the charge that this case itself implicitly requires commitment as well to "the Absolute" he so resists. His resistance, then, will have to stand on his counsel of balance. But this is no principle, and judgments will obviously differ: the humean, for example, will think that the humean view is the perfect balance between denying the existence of laws and more metaphysically inflationary views like Armstrong's.

Without any principle for such views to stave off the Kantian issues about complete explanation, it is little surprise that contemporary metaphysics has tended to drift toward those issues and claims about absolute foundations—again, just as Kant's Dialectic would have us predict. Consider, for example, Schaffer's recent argument for a kind of monistic metaphysics, from the premise of "metaphysical foundationalism":

There must be a ground of being. If one thing exists only *in virtue of* another, then there must be something from which the reality of the derivative entities ultimately derives. (2010, 37)

From this it is supposed to follow that we should draw as a conclusion the only view that can guarantee such a foundation, namely (Schaffer argues) the monistic view that the whole of all reality is prior to its parts.

It would be interesting to try to further defend, in consideration of this kind of contemporary view, Kant's Dialectic conclusion that arguing from such commitments about completeness of reasons leads either to contradiction or dogmatism. But we can at least see that such contemporary metaphysics offers some additional support for Kant's claim that such appeals tend to be either explicit or implicit. So it is easy to see why it is worth worrying that contemporary metaphysics remains vulnerable. And this brings out an appeal of Kant's alternative: Kant offers a principled position blocking appeals to complete foundations, without itself sliding into indifferentism or resting on an overestimation of the power of epistemology-first arguments. Kant's principled solution—his restriction of knowledge—will cut closer to the bone than

would be desired by those of us interested in pursuing metaphysics. But we should recognize the philosophical appeal of the way in which Kant's bounds of sensibility do at least provide a principle—as opposed to something like an appeal to balance. So Kant presents a clear challenge to metaphysics, with lasting force: either show that the dogmatism charge against metaphysical foundationalism does not work, or else provide an equally principled way of pursuing metaphysics that blocks the slide toward metaphysical foundations. Hegel will pursue the latter route.

5.4 The Idea and the Rational, and the Opening for Hegel's Rejoinder

To see the opening for Hegel to respond in this way, consider again the parallel between Kant's skepticism about natural teleology, in particular, and about theoretical inquiry in general: both are forms of inflationary pessimism. The former argues that the implications of teleological judgment are so demanding that we cannot know anything to satisfy them. The latter argues that the aims of reason and all theoretical inquiry are so demanding that we cannot know anything to satisfy them. As with teleology, with the account of reason too the clearest thing about Hegel's response is that it is entirely optimistic about knowledge. Hegel's position is this:

Epistemic optimism: there is no principled limit to our having knowledge satisfying to reason, reaching the goals that guide theoretical inquiry, or answering the questions of the metaphysics of reason.

Hegel's optimism is clearest to see in his use of terminology drawn from the Dialectic to organize the conclusion of the *Logic*. The concluding section of the book is titled "The Idea." The terminology comes from Kant: "[i]t is Kant who reclaimed the expression 'idea' for the 'concept of reason'" (WL 6:462/670). But Hegel's denial of restriction leads him to a departure: While Kant primarily refers to "reason" as a faculty of ours, Hegel argues that we can know reason or "the rational" in the world. And while Kant uses the term "idea" to refer to reason's *conceptions* of the unconditioned, Hegel is arguing that "the idea" is a complete form of reason in the world. So "[t]he idea is the *rational*."¹² Hegel

¹² WL 6:463/670–71. On this connection between the desired conclusions of the final part of the *Logic* and the topic of Kant's Dialectic, there are many approaches. See, for example, also Theunissen (1980, 40) and de Boer (2010b, 38).

even continues to give an account in his final chapter of what he calls “The Absolute Idea.” This is even supposed to involve defending the availability of a kind of “absolute knowledge” (WL 6:469/675).

Hegel’s optimism raises the question of what counterargument strategies would be possible to that end. It can help to think of Kant’s argument, broadly, in terms of these steps:

- (E1) Reason guides all theoretical inquiry by demanding the unconditioned or complete explainers.
- (E2) Such completeness of explanation is best understood in a manner closely enough connected with the objects of rationalist substance metaphysics that the account of reason will also account for a natural and unavoidable interest in those objects.
- (E3) Philosophical consideration of the objects of rationalist substance metaphysics as unconditioned grounds creates unavoidable conflicts, which force the conclusion that our knowledge is limited within the bounds of sense, leaving us unable to know whether or not there is anything that would satisfy reason.

As with natural teleology, there are two easiest to understand openings for an optimistic rejoinder: one that is purely inflationary, and one that is purely deflationary. But we have seen that Hegel’s position on teleology is a mixture. And it is easy to sketch purely inflationary and deflationary approaches to Hegel’s overall response to Kant’s account of reason. I do so neither in order to rest weight on arguments against them, nor on an interpretation of any particular interpretations of Hegel. My aim is rather to open up the possibility of a third, mixed approach, in preparation for defending it by attention to its positive features in the rest of the book.

A rejoinder that is purely inflationary in its optimism would accept (E1) and (E2), but then add—contra Kant—that there are, and that we can have knowledge of, unconditioned grounds in a sense comparable to the objects of rationalist substance metaphysics. It is easiest to think here of taking Hegel’s account of “the idea” to aim for a modified version of Spinoza’s monism, and perhaps an organic or teleological modification: everything real is “in” an organized whole, with an animating principle, or a basic structure, “the idea,” which provides the sufficient reason for everything real.¹³ An obvious question would be how this inflationism would fit with the optimism about knowledge.

¹³ Although I will not argue for interpretations of interpreters here, I would take interesting versions of roughly this first general approach to be present in McTaggart (e.g., 1896, 30), Horstmann (e.g., 1991, 177–82), and Beiser (e.g., 2005, 67).

Specifically, if there are no in-principle epistemic limits relative to such substance, then any such optimistic believer in complete explanations faces a difficult problem: he seems to need an argument for the conclusion that we can know some absolutely complete reason for the exact position, and every other detail, concerning (for example) every particle of matter in the universe. But what would such an explanation be like? And how could we know it? As a philosophical matter, there are some obvious approaches to responding, but it would be difficult to make the case that either of them fit with *Hegel's* commitments. *First*, as a philosophical response, it would be worth considering a view that would deny the reality of finite things, like the particles above, so as to undercut the need for complete explanations of them. But as an interpretation of Hegel, there is a challenge: Hegel argues that Spinoza is forced to this conclusion that finite things do not exist; and Hegel seems to hold that "Spinozism is a deficient philosophy" for this reason; so that seems unlikely to be Hegel's own view.¹⁴ *Second*, as a philosophical response, it would be worth reconsidering views, like those discussed in §4.2: there are such reasons, but these would be knowable in principle only by an intellect superior in kind to our own, capable of grasping even an infinite reality immediately and all at once. But as an interpretation of Hegel, the challenge here would be to explain how this would be compatible with his epistemic optimism, which seems to deny such in-principle limits. One kind of view might claim that we ourselves can somehow break through a barrier into such a superior in-kind immediate knowledge of all reality. The main challenge here would be that, already with the 1807 *Phenomenology*, and consistently from that point forward, Hegel appears to read many of his contemporaries as making just such a claim to immediate knowledge and to sharply criticize those claims.¹⁵ Hegel even appears to reject the very idea of a dualism, or in-principle distinction, between the notion of our own and such a higher or divine form of immediate intellect.¹⁶ One could certainly argue that Hegel takes his philosophy to be distinctive in aiming to demonstrate, or to mediate by discursive argument, results similar to those that others take to be available only to a divine, immediate grasp of reality.¹⁷

¹⁴ WL 6:195/472; and the discussion in §6.4.

¹⁵ See, e.g., the famous denial that the absolute can be "shot from a pistol" (WL 5:65/46–47 and PhG §27/16). On this topic, see Westphal (1989a) and Kreines (2007). Again, I make no claim here about Hegel's development prior to 1807, precisely who Hegel is targeting, and whether he reads them correctly; the point is that he seems to reject such views during this time period.

¹⁶ On this, see Kreines (2007). See, in particular, Hegel's clear rejections of the dualism between our own and an intellect grasping reality immediately, as, for example, in the EL criticism of the idea of immediate knowledge at §§61ff. and especially §75.

¹⁷ For interesting accounts on which the mature Hegel is trying to take such results, widely connected with the perspective of a higher, immediate form of intuition, and place these on a

But if such a reading is to be purely inflationary, in the above sense, then this returns us to the challenge: What is the argument that there is a complete reason for the exact position, and every detail, concerning every particle of matter, and that we can have knowledge of this?

The opposite opening for a rejoinder to Kant would be a purely deflationary optimism, rejecting every step of the above argument, beginning with (E1); it would hold that theoretical inquiry in general need not seek anything like objects supposed to provide complete explanation, so that Hegel's own theoretical project does not fundamentally concern problems about completeness of reason or the unconditioned, discussed in Kant's *Dialectic*. Here it is easiest to think of the idea that Hegel rather fundamentally seeks to radicalize a version of Kant's own positive project from the *Transcendental Analytic*.¹⁸ The challenge here would be explaining why Hegel seems to structure his philosophy around claims—such as those about “the idea” and “reason”—that would seem to indicate a focus more similar to the metaphysical projects discussed in Kant's *Transcendental Dialectic*, or a project addressing the questions about objects providing explanatory completeness that Kant takes to be of central and ineliminable metaphysical interest.¹⁹

But there is another option: once we consider the structure of the Kantian argument targeted by Hegel, we can see that there could also be an optimistic rejoinder to the argument of Kant's *Dialectic* that is partly inflationary and partly deflationary. More specifically, Hegel could accept (E1), that all theoretical inquiry is guided by ideas of explanatory completeness or the unconditioned, and that this raises inescapable philosophical problems about objects that ground complete explanations. But Hegel can then make the partially deflationary case against some *parts* of Kant's own account of explanatory completeness, as, for example, the connection to rationalist substance metaphysics in (E2). And Hegel can try to substitute some different bit of inflationism, akin to his claim about the concept as the substance of life in the case of teleology. More specifically, Hegel can argue that the upshot of the contradictions uncovered by Kant is not that our knowledge is limited, but that we should understand completeness of explanation or the unconditioned in a manner that puts far more distance between this and the objects of rationalist

new kind of philosophical foundation, see, for example, Baum (1986), especially his basic gloss at (32–33) and on the “disappearance of intuition” (225ff.), and also Baum (1990, 173); Düsing (1986a, 125); Beiser (1993, 18; and 2005, 169f.); Longuenesse (2000, 274–76); and Franks (2005, 371–79).

¹⁸ Again, I do not mean to rest any weight on an interpretation of interpreters here. But it seems to me that some especially interesting versions of a more deflationary approach are Pippin (1989, chapter 2) and Brandom (2001).

¹⁹ See also the rejoinders to deflationary readings lodged by Siep (1991) and Beiser (1995).

substance metaphysics—including Spinoza's substance, for example. Hegel might seek here a way of defending an optimism without any need of demonstrating the possibility of knowledge of anything like the objects of rationalist substance metaphysics. This view might remain a partly inflationary optimism: an argument that complete explainers, properly understood, can be known and comprehended by us, without any need for a divine intellect grasping reality immediately and all at once. For this line of argument can hope to show that a complete explainer need not be understood, as in foundationalism, as a metaphysical substance that depends on nothing while explaining itself and everything real.

PART THREE

COMPLETE REASONS

From the Idea to the Absolute Idea

Hegel, I have proposed, gives a partly deflationary and partly inflationary account of reasons and their completeness, and argues that it supports optimism about our knowledge. I develop and defend this approach in two final steps: The first step concerns Hegel's account of explainers that are more complete than would be any step in the sorts of regress at issue in Kant's Antinomies; these are concepts or *Begriffe* with explanatory import more completely their own (chapters 6–8). The second step concerns the possible Kantian rejoinder that a complete alternative to the Dialectic would require more by way of an account of absolute completeness of reason, and so Hegel's account of the absolute, with explanatory import absolutely its own (chapters 9–10). The first step targets the transition to the final "The Idea" section of the *Logic*; the second targets the transition to the "The Absolute Idea" chapter, and so the end of the book.

Against the Metaphysics of the Understanding and the Final Subject or Substratum

The metaphysics of the past . . . is always on hand, as the perspective of the understanding alone on the objects of reason.

—Hegel, EL §27

Hegel argues that the conflicts uncovered by Kant’s Dialectic support a partially inflationary but also partly deflationary response. The first question concerning the deflationary part is this: What part of the way in which we have tended to understand reasons and their completeness should be dismissed? And, further, on what grounds? Once we have a handle on the answers, and so this deflationary part of Hegel’s project, we can turn in chapters below to its more inflationary aspects, and the consequences to follow throughout philosophy.

I begin here (§6.1) with what I take to be the clearest case of a notion Hegel seeks to deflate: that of substance as bare substrate. The idea here stems from the proposal that there must be something absolutely or unconditionally corresponding to the subject of subject-predicate judgment (hereinafter “sp-judgment”). On this topic, the clearest contrast with Kant (§6.2) does not concern precisely the question of the existence of such substrata, but rather whether they would be of interest to reason. Hegel shows that such a “final subject” would be indifferent: it could not support or ground anything, so that it is no legitimate way of conceiving of an explainer or of reason’s interest. And this point begins, at least, to bear on Kant’s epistemic pessimism: If the notion of a final subject or substratum is no part of reason’s interest, then

its unknowability cannot support any conclusion about a real or substantive restriction of our knowledge.

But the notion of an absolutely final, bare substrate is only one specific case of something more general, raising a far broader problem affecting philosophy (§6.3). The problem is that we tend more generally to think of the objects of reason—explainers and complete explainers—in terms of the form of sp-judgment. This is to take what Hegel calls “*the perspective of the understanding alone* on the objects of reason” (EL §27). And this pushes us to think that any given explanatory regress must have an endpoint in a substratum for that regress, which need not be absolutely bare but would have to be at least bare relative to that regress. This, on Hegel’s account, is the root of Kant’s Antinomies, and also why they will arise more generally within metaphysics than Kant recognizes. Hegel concludes that we must systematically reconstruct everything in philosophy from the perspective of reason alone, or in a manner free of the understanding’s concern with substrata. What follows concerning the soul, for example, is not Kant’s denial of knowledge; rather, we must reconceive of the soul. And so on with everything else, all the way to an account of the absolute completeness of reason and a reconception of substance in these terms. But before we come to Hegel’s positive accounts, it is well to note that there are targets for this Hegelian attack throughout early modern philosophy, and how Hegel himself applies the attack in the specific case of Spinoza’s substance metaphysics (§6.4).

6.1 The Indifference of the Bare Substratum, or Substance as Subject

The best way to begin is with the notion of substance as a substratum or subject supporting properties or qualities. Consider Locke’s famous reference:

The idea then we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing. . . .

Locke refers here to “the subject wherein colour or weight inheres,” and he compares the idea that the world is resting on an elephant, resting on a tortoise, resting on something unknown.¹

¹ Locke (1997, II xxiii 2).

Leaving aside the question of Locke's own position on this notion, consider how one might argue that there must be such a thing: If an object has a property (the argument would claim), then there will be a corresponding true sp-judgment where the property corresponds to the predicate. But all this depends on there being some independent object, corresponding to the subject of judgment. We thus begin with a regress of dependence, just as we might with a cosmological argument, and then take the bundling step, arguing that there would have to be a true judgment attributing *all* of an object's properties. The co-instantiation of all of them will depend on there being something independent of all of the properties, and something corresponding to the *final* subject of judgment, but not to any predicate. So there must be an underlying *bare* substrate. I will call this the notion of a "final subject," or "substance-as-substratum." (Unless otherwise noted, I use the term "subject" in this chapter in the sense contrasting with "predicate," not with "object.")

Hegel's *Logic* discusses at several points this notion of a final subject or substance-as-substratum. To begin with, Hegel sometimes uses the term "thing in itself" to refer to just this notion. The idea under discussion is that properties, to be instantiated, would have to be "in" something supporting them, so that we could put all of the properties to one side and end up with just the thing in itself. It will not matter for our purposes whether this is ever Kant's usage of the term "thing in itself";² only that it is sometimes Hegel's. For example:

The subject is . . . the *in-itself*, and the predicate as *determinate existence* in contrast to it. The *subject without the predicate* is what the *thing without properties*, the *thing-in-itself*, is in the sphere of appearance. (WL 6:307/ 554)

Recall that Locke refers to something "unknown"; Hegel holds the unsurprising view that, *if* there were such substance as subject, then it would indeed be unknowable:

[T]he thing-in-itself is . . . the empty abstraction of all determinateness, of which *nothing* can of course be *known* just because it is supposed to be the abstraction of all determination.—Once the thing-in-itself has been presupposed in this way, all determination falls outside it. (WL 6:135/427–28)

² Langton (1998, 28ff.) notes the bare substratum reading of Kant, and some proponents and potential evidence for it, as a step in explaining her own related but distinct reading.

What I want to argue here is that the significance of Hegel's discussions of substrata does not come into view if we just think about general problems concerning what an object is; we need to think as well of connections with problems about *reason* and Kant's Antinomies. The key, in this specific connection, is Hegel's argument that substance as substratum or final subject would be *indifferent* to everything. Hegel supports this indifference conclusion with the same considerations about determinacy that he takes to undermine knowability: In a judgment attributing any determinate feature of any sort, the determinateness will correspond with predicates. So it will be "external" to a substratum corresponding to the subject of judgment, if there must be such a thing. And so Hegel concludes that the substratum considered in itself would be indifferent to any determinacy in virtue of which an object does any of the determinate things that it does—or in virtue of which it influences or is influenced by anything in any determinate manner. Note that the point is not that we have difficulty grasping how the substratum affects or is affected in any determinate manner, where a divine mind might do better; rather, there would be nothing determinate there in virtue of which a final subject/substratum might affect or be affected. It would be too "indeterminate" to be any kind of "ground":

The *subject without the predicate* is what the *thing without properties*, the *thing-in-itself*, is in the sphere of appearance, an empty indeterminate ground; it . . . receives a difference and a determinateness only in the predicate. . . . Through this determinate universality the subject refers to the outside, is open to the influence of other things and thereby confronts them actively. (WL 6:307–8/554–55)

Substance as subject would be *absolutely indifferent*:

The indifference which can be called absolute . . . is one which, *through the negation* of every determinateness of being . . . *mediates itself with itself* to form a simple unity. Determinateness is in it still only a state, that is, *something qualitative and external* which has the indifference as a *substrate*. (WL 5:445–46/326)³

It is crucial to evaluate Hegel's indifference conclusion in terms of *what would be demanded specifically by arguments from the form of sp-judgment*, or

³ In contrast to citations above, "indifference" here renders "Indifferenz" rather than "Gleichgültigkeit"; but Hegel is not talking about something else; he connects the terms on this same page: "Indifferenz" is "abstrakte Gleichgültigkeit ... als Sein gedacht."

what I will call a “judgment-argument.” Imagine I have a large, yellow ball, and you want to convince me, with the argument sketched above, that there is here a bare substratum that supports the instantiation of properties like *yellow*. But the logic of your same argument should apply to your own conclusion: if you require the ball’s being yellow to be expressible in sp-judgment, then so must the substratum’s being such as to support properties. So if you infer that there must always be a substratum corresponding to the subject of judgment, then you must require an even barer substratum, which is as independent of the property of *property-supporting* as it is of the property *yellow*. The same applies to any other work bare substrata or final subjects might be thought to do. Perhaps the proposal will be that the substratum does the work of *binding* an object’s properties together, or *unifying*. Or perhaps distinct substrata are needed to do the work of *distinguishing* distinct objects. But for these too your own argument appealing to the form of judgment would demand properties and a substrate independent of and indifferent to them.

Note that the argument does not impose its own objectionably high standard of what some thing would have to do in order to really *support* anything, or explain anything, or similar. *Whatever* sense in which the proponent of bare substrata thinks that they can support anything, or do anything, will be undercut by their own judgment-argument.

One way to state the conclusion, so far, would be to distinguish the “judgment-argument” from a “dependence argument” for substrata. The conclusion is that, initial appearances to the contrary, no one conclusion could ever be supported by both forms of argument. For substrata demonstrated by a judgment-argument would have to be absolutely bare and indifferent; and anything doing any supporting would not satisfy the judgment-argument’s demand for a substratum corresponding to the final subject of judgment.

Some fans of notions in the neighborhood of bare substrata might want to retreat to employing one or the other form of argument in a purified form, without appeal to the other. But there will be further difficulties either way. First, imagine employing a pure dependence-argument. I have my large, yellow ball. You might insist that the instantiation of the properties here cannot be brute or primitive; it must depend on there being something to support this—a form of substratum. You might advance this argument without any appeal to the form of judgment. This would allow your substratum to retain the feature of supporting the properties dependent on it, so that it might be mostly bare but not absolutely so. But then your substratum will have the property of *being a support*, or similar, and this will be primitive or brute: there will be no further explanation in terms of a further underlying substratum. And if I am prepared to this as primitive, then I might as well return to the beginning and accept as primitive that my ball is yellow, without any substratum at all. It is hard to see

why we should object to a last turtle at the beginning, but then accept one a bit later. Only the notion of an absolutely bare substate, which we can get by appeal to the form of judgment, would have given us something other than an arbitrary stopping point with something partially bare. So the dependent-argument, on its own, is in trouble.

What is more important for understanding Hegel is to consider a pure judgment-argument. This will have the opposite problem: it can provide a non-arbitrary sense of completeness, but only by undermining all sense of dependence. Compare natural accounts of scientific knowledge of entities not directly observable: perhaps scientists legitimately posit the existence of particles too small to observe directly because the best explanation of our observations is that they *depend* on the behavior of underlying unobservables. We might have hoped for a similar account of the supposed knowledge that there are substrata: the best explanation for what we undeniably observe—that certain properties are instantiated—is that this is dependent on underlying substrata. But because the judgment-argument demands giving up all appeal to dependence, there can be no such justification. So there is nothing left to support this posit but an assumed premise that reality simply must correspond to its core to the form of the sp-judgment. As we will see below, Hegel will argue that this “judgment premise”—as I will call it—plays a large but lamentable role in the history of metaphysics. But it is merely assumed:

There was no investigation as to whether such predicates are something true in and of themselves, nor whether the form of judgment is capable of being the form of truth. (EL §28R)

I will return to this more general kind of metaphysics from the perspective of judgments below. For now, the questions concern specifically the bare substratum. Admittedly, the question might be interpreted as admitting that such substrata would be absolutely indifferent, and asking whether they could nonetheless exist. But this is like asking whether there might be something satisfying the description “that of which we can never have knowledge, not even knowledge of whether or not it exists, because it is absolutely indifferent to everything.” Perhaps there can be no reasons justifying knowledge of the non-existence of *this*—if there could, then we would be talking about something else. But, if so, then there can also be no reasons in favor of existence either. In any case, those favoring substrata corresponding to the subject of a judgment have more typically been interested in something that is supposed to support something dependent on it. And here Hegel’s indifference argument provides powerful reasons for the conclusion that the very idea is so at odds with itself that there can be no such thing.

6.2 Kant: The Final Subject and Reason's Ideas of the Unconditioned

Hegel's rejection of substrata is often noted,⁴ but I am arguing that this must be understood specifically in connection with the issues raised by Kant's account of reason. So the most crucial issue most clearly dividing Hegel and Kant, in this neighborhood, does not directly concern whether or not there exists any final subject or substance-as-substrate; it concerns whether any such thing could be of any legitimate interest to a faculty of reason or make any contribution to an understanding of reasons or their completeness.⁵

To see the point, recall first Kant's delicate balance: to justify a real sense of limitation, reason must legitimately demand something ("with every right" [Bxx]) that we nonetheless cannot achieve. For it is obviously easy to formulate *unreasonable* demands and show that we cannot meet them: one could show, for example, that we cannot know anything satisfying the description "that which is unknowable for us." But in itself this is trivial, not a demonstration of real epistemic restriction. For it provides neither reason to think that anything satisfies that description nor any other reason to take the notion seriously at all. Kant, by contrast, argues that we do have reason to take seriously the idea of the unconditioned: we require its guidance in all theoretical inquiry.

One way to conceive of the unconditioned, on Kant's account, is to conceive of an absolute correlate of the subject of judgment, independent of anything correlating to any predicate of any judgment. Granted, part of the point is to deny us knowledge of whether or not any such thing exists. But the other part of the balance is to defend this as a legitimate interest of reason.

This positive claim is clearest in Kant's diagnosis of the error in rationalist arguments specifically for a substantial soul, or soul substance. But it is best to begin by setting aside the particulars about the soul specifically and just consider the role of the notion of substance-as-substrate. There is a helpful discussion in the *Prolegomena*. Here Kant notes that a "true subject" (again, in the sense contrasting with "predicate" rather than "object") would be the substance of something, independent of anything corresponding to predicates:

It has long been observed that in all substances the true subject—namely that which remains after all accidents (as predicates) have been removed—and hence the *substantial* itself, is unknown to

⁴ E.g., Theunissen (1980, 52) and Longuenesse (2007, 63 and 224).

⁵ Contrast Inwood (1983, 120).

us; and various complaints have been made about these limits to our insight.

Granted, Kant immediately says that such a true subject is “only an idea.” But the term “idea” strikes the balance above: part of the point is unknowability; but part of the point is that this idea is of genuine interest to reason. Kant says:

Pure reason demands that for each predicate of a thing we should seek its appropriate subject, but that for this subject, which is in turn necessarily only a predicate, we should seek its subject again, and so forth to infinity (or as far as we get). But from this it follows that we should take nothing that we can attain for a final subject, and that the substantial itself could never be thought by our ever-so-deeply penetrating understanding, even if the whole of nature were laid bare before it. (P 4:333)⁶

So Kant holds that the notion of an “absolute” or “final subject,” or “the substantial itself”—something independent of everything corresponding to predicates of judgment—would be the notion of a kind of unconditioned ground, in a sense that would make it a central case of something in which reason has a legitimate (but for us unsatisfiable) interest.

There is no space here to pursue connections between this notion of substance as absolute subject and the rationalist claims about a soul substance—the claims whose temptation Kant is aiming to explain in a critical manner. There are many complexities concerning these discussions, in both editions of the *Critique* and in the *Prolegomena*.⁷ For us, the important points are only these: (i) Kant consistently portrays the notion of a final subject or substance-as-substratum as one form of the unconditioned; thus our temptation by the unconditioned is supposed to help explain the temptation of rationalist arguments for the soul as substance. (ii) However sharp Kant’s criticisms, he is not asserting knowledge of the nonexistence of final subjects and the like. Kant denies “objective reality,” specifically in the sense of denying *whether or not* there are any such things:

it was proved that the concept of a thing that can exist for itself as subject but not as a mere predicate carries with it no objective reality at all, i.e., that one cannot know whether it applies to any object. (B412)

⁶ In interpreting this passage, I follow Rosefeldt (2003) and Proops (2010).

⁷ It may be, for example, that Kant is ambivalent about whether this case should be expressed in terms of a stepwise regress. The complications are handled well in Proops (2010).

(iii) Kant fits the denial of knowledge of substance as substrate together with his general claim that we are limited by our merely discursive understanding: we have cognitive access to objects only in a *mediate* manner, *through concepts*; concepts can always correspond to a predicate. Thus, the *Prolegomena* passage above continues to deny knowledge:

for the specific nature of our understanding consists in thinking everything discursively, i.e., through concepts, hence through mere predicates, among which the absolute subject must therefore always be absent. (P 4:333)⁸

If the limit really derives from this specific character of our understanding, then this would leave open the logical possibility that an intellect superior in kind—one that grasps reality immediately—could have knowledge.

We can see the strength of Hegel's differing view by considering a dilemma for Kant: On the one hand, Kant can argue for his claim that reason takes a legitimate interest in the unconditioned, specifically by connecting the notion of the unconditioned with explanation and explanatory completeness, or with answers to *why*-questions and complete answers (§4.2). But when we come to Kant's account of the "final subject" or the "substantial in things" as a form of the unconditioned and so of interest to reason, this path becomes the first horn of a dilemma. For Hegel, in showing that such an absolute subject would be indifferent or only an "empty indeterminate ground," is showing that it could not resolve any *why*-question, nor be a necessary part of any explanation for any determinate explanandum. So at the end of this path Kant would have to give up his account of the final subject and its interest to reason.

On the other hand, Kant is, of course, free to stipulate that he applies the term "faculty of reason" to *whatever it is* that has sometimes motivated metaphysicians to take an interest in notions like that of a final subject or substance-as-substrate. Similarly, he could stipulate that his term "unconditioned" is meant to cover everything that has been of interest to such metaphysicians. But if he proceeds in this way, then he loses the above case (via explanatory import) for the *legitimacy* of reason's demands, the need of theoretical inquiry for its guidance, and the conclusion that our knowledge is limited relative to such legitimate rational demands or interests.

The result is a part of Hegel's theory that is a deflationary step: if being a final subject is part of what Kant means by "unconditioned," then a demand for something entirely "unconditioned" in every way would include in part

⁸ See more citations and discussion of this point in Langton (1998, 30).

the demand that it be a final subject; since Hegel's account of reason and the unconditioned will not include that last part, it is relatively less inflationary in this respect. And it is easy to see the further contribution this step promises with respect to epistemic optimism: even if it were agreed that knowledge of such substrata would require jumping over a discontinuity and ascending to the perspective of a divine intellect, capable of grasping reality immediately and all at once, this can no longer make any contribution toward demonstrating a restriction of our knowledge. For such substrata are left of no legitimate interest to reason at all. Rather, we are forming the concept of them by specifically abstracting away anything knowable. An attempt to argue for epistemic limits in this way would be left with a conclusion that establishes a limit only as the trivial point that, if anything satisfies the concept of *that-of-which-we-cannot-have-knowledge*, then we could not have knowledge of it. So it is easy to see Hegel's point where he says that the unknowability of things in themselves is trivial, *if* this just refers to bare substrata, without determinacy. Granted, Hegel seems to announce here also an ambition to draw a conclusion of significance for the whole idea of a restriction of knowledge, beyond just the notion of a bare substratum. But the point about the narrow notion of a bare substratum itself is at least clear:

the question "*what?*" calls for determinations to be produced; but since the things of which the determinations are called for are at the same time presumed to be *things-in-themselves*, which means precisely without determination, the impossibility of an answer is thoughtlessly implanted in the question. . . . [T]hey are as such nothing but empty abstractions. (WL 5:130/94)

The next question, then, is why Hegel should take the narrow point to promise to support broader conclusions—to promise to contribute to a broader overcoming of Kant's restriction of our knowledge.

6.3 The More General Criticism of the Metaphysics of the Understanding

The case of the bare substrate does turn out to be the tip of an iceberg. For it is the most extreme case that exemplifies a prominent and more general way of thinking of reasons and their completeness, namely, thinking of them in terms of the form of sp-judgments. Hegel argues that this characterizes early modern philosophy generally, that it generates problems in many cases fitting a general

pattern, and that we must quite generally overcome this way of thinking by reevaluating notions throughout philosophy.

Hegel, of course, has his own terminology for all of this, which is best explained in the first of three sections on “positions of thought toward objectivity” at the beginning of the *Encyclopedia*.⁹ This first section is on metaphysics “the way it was constituted prior to the Kantian philosophy” (EL §27), or the “metaphysics of the understanding” (EL §32Z). Hegel’s usage of “understanding” here is rooted in the idea that it is, in terms from the first *Critique*, “a faculty for judging” (A69/B94). So “metaphysics of the understanding” is the form of metaphysics that conceives of its ultimate objects, or objects of reason, from the perspective of the understanding, or in terms of the form of judgment. In the paradigmatic case, the substance of objects must be independent of their features, so that determinations are “attributed to the object in an external manner only” (EL §28Z). This is to recognize only what Hegel calls “finite determinations.” So, tying this terminology together: “[t]hinking that produces only *finite* determinations and moves among them is called *understanding*” (EL §25). Hegel makes clear here that he agrees with Kant rejecting pre-Kantian metaphysics as “dogmatism” (EL §32).¹⁰ But we can now see why Hegel’s diagnosis of the trouble with such metaphysics differs from Kant’s and carries different implications.

I noted above one respect in which Hegel finds the metaphysics of the understanding dogmatic: it merely assumes the premise that reality conforms to the form of sp-judgment (EL §28R). And this includes the metaphysics of the understanding presuming that any absolute or ultimate objects of reason must accord with that form of judgment: “[t]hat metaphysics presupposed in general that knowledge of the absolute could take place by attributing predicates to it” (EL §28). We have seen the strength of this criticism in the paradigm case of bare substrata: such metaphysics must indeed merely assume a judgment premise, because it cannot call on consideration of dependence for support.

But Hegel is not merely arguing that we lack reason to believe in such objects; he is arguing that we have good reason not to think in this way. In making sense of the stronger claim, we should avoid the temptation to read Hegel as arguing that the metaphysics of the understanding is inadequate because he holds a metaphysical view conflicting with it. For example, one might read Hegel as fundamentally complaining that the metaphysics of the understanding leaves objects as mutually independent, like atoms in this respect.¹¹ But

⁹ Following Horstmann (1984, 49ff.). See also Stern (1990, 57) and Houlgate (2006, 14ff.).

¹⁰ See also Horstmann (1984, 61) and (1993, 291).

¹¹ I thank Franz Knappik for pushing me on this point.

if we leave it at that, then it will seem that Hegel is arguing from a commitment to a kind of metaphysical anti-atomism which does not receive any philosophical support from this discussion. Or one might read Hegel as fundamentally complaining that the metaphysics of the understanding leaves properties static, or finite, or without real contradictions, etc. But then it will seem that Hegel here assumes some kind of metaphysical dynamism, or infinitude, or real contradiction, or similar. And if we always read all of Hegel's discussions in this way, then each of them will only beg the questions at stake; this is again a "question-begging reading" (§0.6). We must rather find discussions which rather argue for Hegel's metaphysics. And his discussions of the metaphysics of the understanding do provide such arguments. But we can only understand them in this way by finding the ways in which they build from commitments internal to Kant's account of reason.¹²

So it is important to seek to understand why and how Hegel follows Kant in arguing not by imposing an assumed standard of his own, but by finding difficulties *internal* to earlier metaphysics.¹³ And this is where viewing the issue strictly in relation to Kant's account of reason pays off, because it offers the model of Kant's Antinomy. The key will be the way in which Hegel's own diagnosis of the root of antinomies differs subtly from Kant's. Kant says that the "entire antinomy rests" (A497/B525) on an argument that there must be a complete and so unconditioned series of conditions. Our guiding epigraph from Hegel suggests that he sees the problem as internal to a conception of reasons and their completeness on the basis of a *dual demand* for: (i) a complete ground or explainer making possible a complete answer to a series of why-questions ("objects of reason"); and (ii) an underlying substance in things corresponding completely to the subject of judgment ("the perspective of the understanding alone").

Hegel aims to partially deflate this conception by eliminating (ii). There is an ambiguity concerning how to express this aim with respect to the term "unconditioned." If that term is reserved for *the interest of reason*, then Hegel is arguing for a new account of "the unconditioned" on which it has nothing to do with (ii). But if we take the term as essentially encompassing both (i) and (ii), then Hegel is arguing that reason is not interested in "the unconditioned," but rather only in (i) completeness of reasons. Hegel sometimes expresses himself

¹² Cf. Inwood (1983, 158).

¹³ Granted, the best readings of this material find another way to find arguments here, focused not on reason but more directly on problems about how to conceive of objects generally; see especially Horstmann (1984, 49ff.) and Stern (1990). But I think that only adding a sense of the argument from reason promises to build support all the way to Hegel's account of completeness of explanation in "the idea."

in both ways (§8.2), with a preference for the former; I will follow. In any case, the terminology should not affect the substance, which we can see if we consider the arguments of Kant's Second Antinomy in terms of this dual demand:

First, take the antithesis argument against simple parts. What makes the case potentially convincing is (i), the demand for *explainers*, accounting for why the whole fills its region of space: for parts to explain this, simples must each occupy some portion of that region, and so be not only simple but also divisible, "which contradicts itself" (A435/B463).

Second, take the thesis argument for simple parts. What makes this potentially convincing is the other side of the dual demand, (ii) requiring something corresponding to the subject of judgment. The idea would be this: where there is composition of *X*, there must be *Ys* with the property of *composing X*; if *Ys* are further composed by something, then the same applies; thus there must finally be some independent, underlying, ultimate *Zs*, corresponding with the absolute or final subjects of the judgment attributing the property of *composing X*. So Kant's own formulation of the thesis argument strikingly says that reason itself demands "subjects," and specifically "subjects of all composition" (A436/B464). Hegel emphasizes the point in this way: just as properties are external to a final subject, Kant's thesis argument takes "composition" as "a relation which is . . . external . . . and does not concern the substances themselves" (WL 5:142/160). And the argument concerns a "substrate given to . . . these substances in the world" (WL 5:141/159).

In sum: thinking of reasons and their completeness in terms of explanations or answers to why-questions pushes us to deny simples; thinking of this *also* in terms of something corresponding to the subject of judgment pushes us to deny that denial. Thinking in terms of the dual demand puts us at odds with ourselves.

This analysis of the antinomy suggests a very general difficulty, potentially arising in *any* case of an explanatory regress. And the target of the antinomy, thus construed, is not just an absolutely bare substrate, but a different object in each case of an explanatory regress. In our specific case of part and whole, the problem is not that simple parts would have to be *absolutely bare* substrata or *absolutely* indifferent. Nothing changes if we give them mental properties, for example. The problem is that "subjects of all composition" would have to be bare of and indifferent *specifically to all spatial extension*. Thinking in terms of subjects of a regress always pushes us toward objects bare of and indifferent *specifically to that regress*; thinking in terms of explanation for that regress always pushes us in a conflicting direction. In this way, our guiding epigraph draws together the problem that Hegel takes to overwhelm pre-Kantian metaphysics: it is "the perspective of the understanding alone on the objects of reason."

It is easy to contrast Kant's own diagnosis of the problem of the Antinomy with Hegel's. Kant holds that the problem in the Antinomy stems from application of a *legitimate* way of conceiving of the unconditioned to a *specific domain that it cannot fit*—the domain within the bounds of sense, the limits of our knowledge, or the bounds delimited by the forms of our sensible intuition, space and time. Again, “the entire antinomy” rests on application of a principle about complete conditions specifically to “objects of the senses” (A497/B525).¹⁴ Kant thus takes us to be forced to the conclusion that our knowledge is limited to that domain, and that we can save the coherent and legitimate thought of the unconditioned outside that domain.

But we have seen Hegel's reasons for thinking that the problem in the Antinomy has nothing to do with an application to a specific domain; *the problem is rather entirely internal to the conception of the unconditioned that is so applied*. The problem is that we tend to think of reasons and their completeness through the lens of the form of sp-judgment—to take “the perspective of the understanding alone on the objects of reason”—yielding incoherence, on any and every domain.¹⁵

The concept of the soul provides a helpful test case. It is crucial that Kant's view in his critique of rational psychology is not that something like the Second Antinomy arises here, with respect to the idea of the soul as a simple substance or absolute subject. For that would show that there cannot be such a soul, just as there cannot be any explanatory completeness exhaustively within a series of conditions in space. But Kant does not aim to show that there cannot be such a soul substance. On the contrary, part of the point of Kant's arguments against the possibility of knowledge of a simple soul substance is to preserve room for a belief in such a soul, safe from any possible theoretical demonstrations to the contrary (e.g., Bxxix–xxx). In general, Kant says of the ideas of reason that “there is no contradiction” in them, “except only the cosmological ones, where reason runs up against an antinomy” (A673/B701).

But Hegel's diagnosis shows that the same problem from the Second Antinomy will arise with respect to the other ideas, including the concept of a soul substance as final subject. Imagine I am thinking about the color red.

¹⁴ Kant has different ways of portraying the point, but this is the way that is crucial to the conclusion that our knowledge is limited. Ameriks thinks Hegel fails to see this position of Kant's: “not about the contradictions of reason as such. . . . [T]he chapter is about how the infinite or unconditional (supposedly) cannot be determined to be present in the empirical realm” (1985, 26). But Hegel does sometime note that that is *Kant's* position (e.g., WL 5:274–5/201). In my account Hegel does not misunderstand but argues for a different understanding of antinomies.

¹⁵ I agree with Stern (1990, 57) about the Kantian view that Hegel rejects here, but see the points he notes as resting in turn on the further idea that the understanding's demand for substrata is the yet more basic cause of antinomies concerning reasons.

I know that the property *thinking about red* is instantiated. Must this be “in” a soul, in the sense of a substrate itself independent of all such mental properties? A thesis argument will make the case—drawing on the second part of the dual demand, requiring substrata—that to think away the soul as substrate would be to think away the instantiation of the property, just as thinking away the ultimate substrate of composition would think away the composition. Thus, the thesis argument concludes that there must indeed be a soul substance as absolute subject. The antithesis argument would argue—drawing on the first part of the dual demand, requiring explainers—against the existence of this soul as absolute subject, bare of such mental properties. Assume first that there is such a thing. But it could not be bare of all such properties, for then it would be indifferent to why any given property—such as *thinking about red*—is instantiated. The first part of the dual demand, however, requires explainers, without such explanatory gaps. So we must conclude that the soul as a substrate bare of mental properties would not be bare of mental properties (compare: the simple would be composite). Thus, we must reject the assumption that there is a soul substance as absolute subject. In sum, a dual-demand conception of the soul must be every bit as incoherent as a dual-demand conception of explanatory completeness in an exclusively spatio-temporal world.

I will give another example, involving the ground of dispositions and contemporary claims about this, in chapter 7. For now, note that, if Hegel’s diagnosis is right, then the Antinomies will support very different conclusions than Kant intends. Take again the case of the soul. Hegel concludes that Kant was right to criticize what rationalists assert about the soul, but wrong to conclude that their way of thinking about the soul is just a thought, rather than anything of which we could have knowledge. Kant should rather have recognized an incoherence in the mere thought of soul as an absolute subject:

it should be deemed a good result of the Kantian critique that philosophizing about spirit has been freed from the soul-*thing*. . . . However, the true viewpoint . . . will surely not be that they are *thoughts*, but that such thoughts in and of themselves hold no truth. (EL §47R)¹⁶

More specifically, Kant should have aimed for a reconception of the soul without the influence of the form of sp-judgment, so that it will not be a thing,

¹⁶ Compare Theunissen on Hegel’s “Kritik an der Verdinglichung der lebendigen und geistigen Subjektivität” (1984, 48); Pinkard (1988, 79–80). Also EG §389, and on this deVries (1988, 21); Wolff (1992, 15).

in the sense of a substrate corresponding to a subject of judgment, in which properties inhere:

If we cling to the mere *representation* of the “I” as we commonly entertain it, then the “I” is only the simple *thing* also known as the *soul*, a thing in which the concept *inheres* as a possession or a property. (WL 6:255–56/516)

Note here that Hegel does not just assume a metaphysics on which there are no such things of substrata. Rather, considering the issues against the background of Kant’s account of reason provides Hegel with an argument against this kind of metaphysics of the self, an argument for his contrasting metaphysics, which does without conceiving anything in terms of a hidden substratum, or as a “thing” in that sense.

And note in this last passage, first, that Hegel is aiming to overcome a position he takes to articulate how we “commonly” approach the self or soul. And, second, he aims to overcome a position he takes to cohere with how the self or soul appears if depicted by *Vorstellung* or representation, in the sense of imagistic or figurative representation, which Hegel frequently contrasts with conceptual comprehension, or grasping in terms of the concept or *Begriff*. With respect to the soul, as in general, Hegel’s reconceptions will make heavy use of his theory of the concept or *Begriff*, as well as his position on teleology, aiming to recover elements Hegel sees in Aristotle (e.g., WL 6:489–90/690). So although Hegel’s endeavor is partly deflationary, the argument is linked from the beginning with a larger program that is not entirely deflationary. In particular, the actual argument is not consistent with anything like an attempt to deflate philosophical theories in favor of supposedly unproblematic common sense, nor any other kind of exit from metaphysics.¹⁷ Rather, Hegel’s case is built from the beginning on an agreement with Kant on rejecting indifferentism, in favor of the view that we must at least think of reasons and their completion. The partly deflationary subtraction of the perspective of the understanding is justified on grounds that it prevents coherent thought about such reasons, committing Hegel to constructing a better metaphysics of complete reasons. So it is unsurprising that some of Hegel’s individual claims can look deflationary; he argues, for example, that many previous philosophical questions about the soul are simply uninteresting, because they treat the soul as a thing in the sense of a substrate.¹⁸ But Hegel’s argument cannot be separated from the demand

¹⁷ Contrast Theunissen (1980): he argues that criticism of notions of indifferent substrata should force philosophy *out of metaphysics*, because “Metaphysisches Denken ist Vorstellen von Substraten” (52); this would leave Hegel’s own project schizophrenic (61).

¹⁸ EG §389. deVries (1988, 21); Wolff (1992, 15).

to answer metaphysical questions about complete reasons; Hegel's replacements will involve inflationary appeals to his metaphysics of the concept and teleology.

Further, Hegel's argument would not allow him to limit such attention to the case of the soul; if it forces rethinking the soul, then it forces a systematic rethinking of everything else in the same respect. For Hegel's argument shows that the same antinomy problems drawn from Kant's Dialectic arise quite generally, beyond just the four specifically cosmological Antinomies. Systematically confronting all those antinomies in every case is what is one respect in which the *Logic* is "dialectical":

the antinomy occurs not only in the four specific *objects* taken from cosmology but instead in *all objects*. . . . To know this and to gain knowledge of objects thus characterized belongs to the essence of a philosophical consideration. This characteristic constitutes what determines itself further on as the *dialectical* moment of the logical. (EL §48R)¹⁹

This includes attention to the objects of special metaphysics, freeing our conceptions of these from pictorial or figurative representation, as, for example, by the imagination, and from any demand for substrata:

the metaphysics which sought to comprehend with the pure forms of thought such particular substrata, originally drawn from the imagination, as the soul, the world, and God. (WL 5:61/42)²⁰

And the goal is to replace these conceptions with Hegel's alternatives:

Logic, however, considers these forms free of those substrata, which are the subjects of *figurative representation*, considers their nature and value in and for themselves. (WL 5:61/42)

For the same reasons, Hegel will also aim to reconceive of substance. His view is that we tend to think of objects as made up of independent properties, on the one hand, all *in* or *supported by* a substrate that provides the substance of things, on the other—supported by (in Kant's terms) "in all substances the true subject . . . the *substantial* itself" (P 4:333). Hegel will aim to reconceive

¹⁹ Cf. Beiser (2005, 166).

²⁰ On this passage, see also Theunissen (1980, 38–39) and de Boer (2010b, 38).

of substance in terms of the *Begriff* or concept. In short, the aim is to show that an immanent concept is what makes a substance the what it is, so that there can be no imagining this something apart from its concept. So Hegel refers to “the *concept* of the thing, *the universal which is present in it* just as there is present . . . in each individual animal a specific *principle* that makes it animal.” The concept, in this sense, is no mere predicate in the sense of something external to the substantial. And the result is a view of substance that cannot be the object of figurative representation, but must be thought:

there is no saying what such an individual could still be if this foundation were removed from him, no matter how many the predicates with which he would still be otherwise adorned—if, that is, such a foundation can be called a predicate like the rest. The indispensable foundation, the concept, the universal which is thought itself (provided that with the word “thought” one can abstract from figurative representation), cannot be regarded as *just* an indifferent form that attaches *to* a content.²¹

Stern (1984) gives a powerful comparison of such claims with a kind of Aristotelian theory of substance, contrasting both “bare substratum” and “bundle” theories. But attention to the connection to Kant’s Dialectic suggests some additional points about the broader context of Hegel’s argument for this view: First, Hegel’s metaphysics here cannot be limited, out of a concern with Kantian epistemological criticisms of extravagant metaphysics or anything else, to a general metaphysics or ontology, as opposed to a special metaphysics addressing ideas of the unconditioned.²² Second, this aspect of Hegel’s argument is connected from the beginning to his ambition to develop a philosophy that is more of a systematic and interconnected whole than he takes Aristotle’s philosophy to be (VGP 19:133/2:118). The reason for both points is again that Hegel’s negative arguments are built around his agreement with Kant about the need to think of reasons and complete reasons; so the same argument supporting the reconception of substance will, if it works at all, require an account of the completeness of reasons, or something in this respect a replacement for Kant’s ideas of the unconditioned and rationalist special metaphysics.

But I will turn to Hegel’s positive reconceptions in chapters below. For now, the point is to emphasize the great generality of the deflationary part of Hegel’s view. Hegel’s treatment of the antinomy effectively distinguishes two kinds of

²¹ WL 5:26–7/17. I focus on the application to animals to forestall until chapter 9 issues about our own most fundamental concept or kind.

²² Cf. Stern (2009, esp. 30–34).

arguments throughout metaphysics: First, there are those that look to some phenomenon and claim that further *explainers* are necessary—just as Hegel looks to regularity in nature and argues, contra empiricists, that something more by way of laws is necessary, something ultimately involving immanent concepts or kinds. Second, there are those arguments that look to some phenomenon and claim that further *substrata* are necessary—as in arguments for the existence of bare substrata, or arguments from the instantiation of mental properties to the existence of the soul as substance/substrate. Once the distinction is recognized, we are supposed to see that the second sort of argument only seemed appealing insofar as it masquerades as sharing support from the considerations about explanation that drive the first. So Hegel is arguing that the second sort of argument must be rejected everywhere, specifically as a means to drawing better and clearer metaphysical conclusions in case of the first sort of argument. The result will be an unusual mixture: Hegel's views will be as metaphysically robust, in the first sort of case, as he takes Aristotle's to be. And yet his views are as dismissive, in the second sort of case, as any later anti-metaphysical philosopher; we can even compare Nietzsche, who argues that our temptation to posit substance as substratum, corresponding to a subject independent of predicates, stems merely from a prejudice of language.²³ One of the most distinctive features of Hegel's philosophy is this combination of extreme metaphysical ambition about reasons with such a dismissal of any metaphysics of substrata. But there is a systematic reason for the unusual mixture: philosophy must be rethought in terms of Kant's discoveries in the Dialectic.

6.4 Early Modern Metaphysics of the Understanding, Especially Spinoza

Another way to appreciate the great generality of the deflationary part of Hegel's argument is to briefly consider how his criticisms might be pressed against parts, at least, of the views of paradigmatic rationalists and empiricists.

If we were to try to apply the worry about the metaphysics of the understanding in a critique of Descartes, we would best focus on his sometime use of a definition of substance as substrate or subject:

Substance. This term applies to every thing in which whatever we perceive immediately resides, as in a subject, or to every thing by means

²³ See, e.g., *Genealogy of Morals* 1.13. On the comparison, see especially Horstmann (1993).

of which whatever we perceive exists. By “whatever we perceive” is meant any property, quality, or attribute of which we have a real idea. The only idea we have of a substance itself, in the strict sense, is that it is the thing in which whatever we perceive . . . exists. (1984, 2.114)

Curley (1969, 8–10) influentially notes a “puzzle” here about two different definitions of substance; his worry about the substrate definition is that Descartes needs it to prove the existence of substance, but it should leave that substance otherwise unknowable.

Pursuit of Descartes, however, would lead too far afield. Instead, consider issues in Leibniz’s similar to those already discussed above. Of course, there is much in Leibniz that Hegel will want to borrow; for example, even in criticizing the principle of sufficient reason widely identified with Leibniz, Hegel says that he takes Leibniz’s emphasis on a priority of teleology to be more convincing and important (WL 6:82–83/388). Still, Leibniz’s account of monads creates an interpretive puzzle just where we would predict from Hegel’s worry about the perspective of the understanding on the objects of reason. In short, Leibniz seeks to reduce extended bodies to the substance of monads. But there is a seeming “ambivalence,” as Furth influentially puts it, concerning “the manner of the reduction.”²⁴ On the one hand, sometimes it seems that extended bodies are supposed to reduce to *perceptions* of monads, or to how things *seem* to monads; this would be a view along the lines of phenomenism.²⁵ For example, Leibniz says that “[m]atter and motion are not substances or things as much as they are the phenomena of perceivers.”²⁶ On the other hand, sometimes it seems that extended bodies are supposed to reduce to aggregates of monads or simple substances themselves. For example, Leibniz also says that “if we consider their extension alone, then bodies are not substances, but many substances” (1989, 34).

Perhaps there is a resolution of the puzzle and defense of the appeal and coherence of Leibniz’s view here. But thinking from Hegel’s perspective makes the puzzle look like a potential opening for attack, along these lines: Leibniz seeks to argue from something familiar (extended material things). He then seeks to find here a regress of dependence on parts. And he seeks to show that there must be some kind of complete ground for this regress. To get from the dependence to any form of completion, Leibniz (the Hegelian could argue) must take up the perspective of the understanding on the objects of reason, and conceive of substance as a substrate underlying composition, thus yielding

²⁴ Furth (1967, 188).

²⁵ Borrowing from Rutherford’s formulation (1990, 12).

²⁶ Leibniz (1989, 181); cited at Rutherford (1990, 13).

the concept of an entirely unextended monad. But this creates a widely noted difficulty: there seems no way, in Furth's terms, of "explaining how the 'aggregation' of unextended beings . . . can result in something extended" (1967, 188). The general point is just that the substances we get as substrates cannot do the explanatory work we expected. (Hegel's *Logic* tends to associate monads with such problems about indifference generally, e.g., WL 5:189/137; 6:410–13/632–34). But now think of the extended bodies with which we began: given the PSR, they would need an explanation if they are real, but their extension seems inexplicable; thus there is pressure toward the eliminativist conclusion that extension is not real but phenomenal. So the argument at work in rationalist substance metaphysics (the attack would conclude) is at odds with itself, or requires incompatible commitments: it holds that there is an explanatory dependence of real extended bodies on underlying substances; but it can only conceive of ultimate underlying substances as substrates, which would prevent them from playing the demanded explanatory role.

With respect to early modern empiricism, it is easy to see why Hegel includes it too under the heading of "metaphysics of the understanding." In short: if we assume that the objects of reason must be understood from the perspective of the understanding, then philosophical worries about those objects *so conceived* will seem force a rejection of reason and its objects altogether, generating a blanket skepticism about reason; and this is the path Hegel sees empiricism following. Berkeley (Hegel says) takes Locke to assert the existence of substance-as-substrate; Berkeley rejects this, but only in the case of supposed material substance/substrate (VGP 20:272/3:366). Hume sees that strict empiricist considerations, stemming from Locke, should support the elimination of much more. They should support elimination of all substance/substrate, including the mental. And they should support the elimination of any kind of universals that might have explained anything, or done any work binding particulars together (VGP 20:277/3:371). And it is easy to see how this generates difficulties for Hume, most famously in the case of the *Treatise* account of the self and personal identity: a bundle theory of the self, as an alternative to rationalism, faces difficulties if metaphysics cannot include anything but the loose and separate, leaving nothing to tie bundles together.²⁷ Hegel's view is that empiricists were correct to reject substance-as-subject; but only if we make the mistake of taking the perspective of the understanding on reason will this seem to require a problematic rejection of reason generally. And so Hegel rejects aspects of both rationalism and empiricism. This is not fundamentally an objection to their epistemological views, as in Kant's complaint that one gives

²⁷ Hume (1975a, 635).

epistemological privilege to concepts and the other to sensible intuitions (A271/B327). Hegel has comprehensive grounds of another sort.

But for understanding Hegel, the most important single case is probably Spinoza, and here it is worth looking to Hegel's own interpretation. Hegel gives several arguments in the *Logic* and elsewhere for the conclusion that Spinoza is forced by his own logic toward the conclusion that there is no real determinacy, only substance in the form of a single bare, indifferent, and indeterminate substrate. The argument in Hegel that most clearly employs the worry about the perspective of the understanding concerns Spinoza's account of the *attributes* of substance. To see the point, consider Spinoza's claim that thought and extension are themselves attributes of God or substance, while our finite thoughts and bodies depend on God insofar as they are modes of those attributes. Spinoza's *Ethics* also argues that thought cannot be conceived through extension, nor extension through thought (E1P10); neither can be any ground or reason for the other.²⁸ But here is a difficulty: if these attributes are so independent that neither of them could be ground or reason for the other, how could they also share a single ground or reason in one substance? From Hegel's point of view, Spinoza can answer only by taking up the perspective of the understanding, or sp-judgment: he can then hold that substance is a single *subject* that both are *in*, or in which both *inhere*. Hegel's worry, however, is that there is then no route back out from substance, so conceived as subject, to any explanation of why substance should have distinct attributes, or any determinate differences at all. For substance as subject would be merely indifferent to different attributes "in" it. So Hegel poses a question about the attributes, which he thinks Spinoza cannot answer:

[E]verything proceeds inwards, and not outwards; the determinations are not developed from substance, it does not resolve itself into these attributes. (VGP 20:173/3:264)²⁹

Since everything real is supposed to have an explanation, if the distinct attributes cannot be so explained, then they also cannot be real—nor can any modes of these attributes. And that is one source of support for Hegel's *Logic* conclusion that Spinoza's substance would have to be so indifferent that everything else must vanish or be dissolved into it:

Spinozism is a deficient philosophy because *reflection* and its manifold determining is in it *an external thinking*.—The substance of this

²⁸ See Della Rocca (2008) on the "conceptual" and "explanatory barrier."

²⁹ See also Hegel on this problem for Spinoza in a review of Jacobi's work at *Werke* 15:10, and Bowman on this (2013, 19).

system is *one substance*, one indivisible totality; there is no determinateness which would not be contained in this absolute and be dissolved into it. (WL 6:195/472)

Or, in Spinoza's substance, "all the determinations of being, like in general every further concrete differentiation of thought and extension, etc., are posited as vanished" (WL 5:330/333).

Or, Spinoza's philosophy is unacceptable not (as is more often worried) because it is an atheism but because it is an "acosmism" (EL §50R; cf. VGP 20:163): it eliminates determinate reality.³⁰

Note in this connection that Spinoza's definition of substance does open itself for interpretation as a dual demand for both a subject/substratum ("in itself") and also an explainer ("conceived through itself"):

By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, *i.e.*, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed. (E1D3)

Applying Hegel's worry about the perspective of the understanding yields the concern that anything in itself, in the sense required, would not be something in terms of which anything could be conceived or explained.

Hegel also has other arguments for the same view that Spinoza is forced to eliminate everything but an empty indifferent substance. For example, one line of argument is that Spinoza cannot derive finite modes from substance: he "merely assumes individual determinations, and does not deduce them from substance" (VGP 20:196/3:289). In a sense, Spinoza himself raises this difficulty:

Whatever has been determined to exist . . . has been so determined by God. . . . But what is finite and has a determinate existence could not have been produced by the absolute nature of an attribute of God; for whatever follows from the absolute nature of an attribute of God is eternal and infinite. (I P28D)

³⁰ For this reason I think that Hegel's argument about Spinoza is powerful. Contra Bartuschat (2007, 103), the trouble does not spring only from external assumptions of Hegel's own. The trouble springs from Spinoza's own promise for complete explanation of everything, and the consequent attempt to link his all-explainer to determinate objects. For a contemporary worry about Spinoza and rationalism compared with Hegel's, see Della Rocca (2012a). Another way to express the Hegelian worry is, in Schaffer's (2010) terms, to say that the *reasons* offered in favor of a "priority monism," assuming as is likely that they will include a PSR, would then push us farther, into "existence monism."

Spinoza here tries to solve the problem by saying that the reason for a given finite mode is “God insofar as it is modified by a modification which is finite and has a determinate existence” (I P28D). But the answer refers explanatory questions about something finite partly to other finite things; this seems to leave unanswered the explanatory question—inevitable for any rationalist, like Spinoza, arguing *from* a demand that there always be reasons or explainers *to* the existence of God (E1P11D2)—concerning the existence of all of the finite, altogether.³¹ But Spinoza insists that God must be the reason for everything that exists. So if there can be no reason in God or substance for the finite, then there is pressure on Spinoza to deny the existence of the finite. The worry is not that Spinoza cannot articulate a view that includes the finite, or does not have resources for accounting for the finite; the worry is that any such view or resources would be in tension with his own *argument* for monism.

This result is far-reaching: Hegel’s concern cuts against the very idea of arguing for a One substance that is both something that everything is in, and also a sufficient reason for itself and for finite reality.³² And I will argue below that Hegel’s own metaphysics of the absolute is indeed no form of this—no rationalist monism, in this sense—even if his metaphysics will include some claims that can seem similar, such as the claim that “the idea” is the substance of everything; and even if he will develop an analogous form of *epistemological* monism, binding his system together.

It is worth noting that Hegel lodges similar complaints against many of his contemporaries: they are monists, but (Hegel alleges) their absolute is so indeterminate that all determinate content vanishes. In the 1807 *Phenomenology*, Hegel highlights a kind of philosophy that would claim that “in the absolute . . . all is one” and would “palm off its absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black—this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity” (PhG §16/9). There is no space here to consider contemporaries like Schelling, and the complicated development of his relationship with Hegel—or to consider whether Hegel’s interpretations of his contemporaries are fair.³³ I mention

³¹ Following Newlands’s reading (2011, 104).

³² Contrast Beiser, for example: “Hegel and Romantics” hold that a self is “a mode of the single infinite substance” (2005, 44). Some, like Inwood (1983, 233), think that Hegel’s criticism of Spinoza is unfair in a way that masks similarities between them. Even if unfair, contra my case here, I think that we should still try to understand Hegel in a manner consistent with his own complaint (well-founded or not).

³³ It is worth noting the sorts of citations that might suggest the view Hegel sees in Schelling, for example: “if we could view everything that is in the totality, we would perceive . . . a pure identity in which nothing is distinguishable” (2001b, 4:128). And this “absolute identity” is “unconditioned” (4:119) and the “ground of reality” (4:146).

his criticism for only two limited reasons. First, to note that Hegel takes his dismissal of the metaphysics of substrata, including a substratum of one substance, to play a role in his criticisms of his contemporaries as well. And, second, to note that this too is part of Hegel's case for epistemic optimism, or his case against the limitation of our knowledge. For Hegel's response to these forms of monism is not the Kantian-style claim that we cannot know whether or not any such One substratum exists. Rather, Hegel's response is that this is not a coherent conception of substance, or of anything of any concern to reason; it is too incoherent to support a claim that our knowledge is limited. As an attempt to articulate a limit or restriction of our knowledge, an appeal to an unknowable oneness would be as empty as appeal to a bare substratum, or a thing-in-itself in this specific sense. So the assertion of a restriction in these terms would be as trivial and insubstantial as the denial of knowledge of anything satisfying the concept of *that-which-cannot-be-known*. And so, extending a citation noted above:

of course, it is impossible to know *what* the thing-in-itself is. . . . [S]ince . . . *things-in-themselves* . . . means precisely without determination, the impossibility of an answer is thoughtlessly implanted in the question, or else a senseless answer is given.—The thing-in-itself is the same as that absolute of which nothing is known except that in it all is one.

But, once again, this is no purely deflationary program. On the contrary, Hegel's criticism commits the *Logic* to replacing accounts of reasons and complete reasons formed from the mere perspective of the understanding. And he will replace them with an account built on his metaphysics of the concept. So he immediately continues from the passage above to promise his replacement:

What, however, the thing-in-itself in truth is, what there basically is in it, of this the *Logic* is the exposition. But in this *Logic* something better is understood by the *in-itself* than an abstraction, namely, what something is in its concept. (WL 5:130/94)

So Hegel will deflate claims about a One substance supposed to underlie all reality, and a thing in itself in *this* sense. But he is not a pure deflationist. He will substitute a partly inflationary account of what things are in themselves in terms of the metaphysics of the concept. And so we must now leave aside the challenges involved in interpreting all of these other figures and devote the remaining space to consideration of the prospects for the execution of the

positive project that all this promises but does not yet provide: Hegel's attempt to build from his theory of the concept to substrata-free notions throughout philosophy, extending from the metaphysics of substance to the absolute, and from reasons generally to complete reasons—and the attempt to demonstrate that there is no in principle barrier to our knowledge with respect to any of these.

Insubstantial Holism and the Real Contradiction of the Lawful

Chemism

The being of one object is the being of another.

—Hegel, WL 6:430/646

Hegel, we have seen, argues that thinking of substrata is no way of understanding reasons or their completeness.¹ But excluding substrata in this way doesn't yet provide a positive account of how to understand the narrower notion of reasons that will remain. The way to approach the *Logic's* final account of this is to begin with a paradigm case of explanatory *incompleteness*, found in the account of merely *lawful* concepts or *Begriffe*, in the “Chemism” chapter. This comes shortly before the transition to the final section of the book (“The Idea”).

So I begin here with lawful concepts, or the natures of lawfully interacting kinds of things. Hegel argues that any such thing would be dependent for its nature on others within a whole network, and so lacking in independent substance of its own (§7.1). On the face of it, this view can seem unsettling—so much so that more recent metaphysicians sometimes suggest some further, hidden ground providing the substance for lawfully interacting things. But Hegel's criticism of the metaphysics of the understanding gives him reason to embrace the unsettling view, or the conclusion that the lawful is thoroughly insubstantial (§7.2). In fact, there are two senses of insubstantiality here: First, the lawful has no substrate corresponding to a last subject in judgments attributing relational properties. This is no reason to reject insubstantial holism,

¹ This chapter builds on results from Kreines (2008a).

on Hegel's view; some things have no substrata. Second, a lawful concept or nature has no explanatory import of its own; all have this only in relation to others, with no end of this regress. This is more important, but not in the sense that it should convince us that there must be some hidden and more complete, or less dependent, side of the lawful itself; rather, it should convince us that the lawful exists, but exists as truly incomplete or lacking. And we can approach in these terms the completeness of reasons: this will require something that, unlike the lawful, does have explanatory import of its own. But before turning to these implications concerning Hegel's account of the idea and reason, we must note a striking further consequence: the insubstantiality of the lawful is a form of real contradiction (§7.3).

7.1 The Being of One Object Is the Being of Another

I begin with lawfully interacting concepts, kinds, or natures. One of Hegel's favorite examples is that of acids and bases: on contact, they neutralize one another. In the *Logic* he discusses such lawful interaction in the chapter called "Chemism," but emphasizes that he is not talking about chemistry in any ordinary sense; he is not talking about "that form of elemental nature that strictly goes by that name" (WL 6:429/645). Rather, "chemism" refers to *lawfully interacting kinds*. And the section carries implications concerning the lawful more generally: "mechanism" refers to any *homogenous* lawful kind; "chemism" to the lawfully *interacting*; so "[b]oth, mechanism as well as chemism, are therefore included under natural necessity" or (as I will put it) under the *lawful* (WL 6:438/652).²

With respect to the lawfully interacting kinds, Hegel claims that the very nature of one will depend on its relations to others. If it were in the nature of a crystal of salt, for example, to dissolve in water, then this crystal would be such that its very nature could not be understood except by thinking of something else—of water. I will consider the background of the argument in §7.2. But the basic case is simple, and argues by a kind of *reductio*. Hegel assumes for the sake of argument that lawful kinds of things do have natures that are independent: "the chemical object is at first a *self-subsistent* totality in general, one reflected into itself and therefore distinct from its reflectedness outwards." But this assumption would leave the chemical object "indifferent" to everything else, and not lawfully interacting. Thus we must reverse the initial assumption:

² Mechanism too thus must be understood in terms of relations, as for example in the account of gravitation noted above in terms of relation to centers of gravity (§1.4).

the outwards reference is thus a determination of the object's immediacy and concrete existence. . . . Accordingly, a chemical object is not comprehensible from itself, and the being of one object is the being of another. (WL 6:430/646)

Or, in terms of the similar discussion in the "Observing Reason" section of the *Phenomenology*, the lawfully interacting kinds "are only this relation" to others (PhG §251).

From this intermediate conclusion, Hegel proceeds directly to a form of metaphysical holism: If Xs and Ys interact lawfully, then these relations will be part of the nature of an X. But the point would apply as well to Y and also to any Z with which it lawfully interacts. And so on. Thus the "being" of things of such kinds will depend on a whole interconnected network of kinds and laws within which it is a part. In Hegel's terms, here the "determinateness" of anything in particular is a "moment" of the concept (*Begriff*) of the whole: it "is the concrete moment of the individual concept of the whole which is the universal essence, the *real kind* [*Gattung*] of the particular objects" (WL 6:430/646).³

When I write that this conclusion is about lawfully interacting *objects*, I mean to follow Hegel's usage in writing of "the chemical object"; there are no grounds for saying that this section of the *Logic* is not about objects, or only about theories or thoughts in a sense that would suppose a contrast with it being about objects, or similar. Of course, I do not mean to refer to an "object" in the sense of something supposed to correspond to an ultimate subject in the form of subject-predicate judgment. But the argument is also not only or directly about *particular* objects. Clearly Hegel is not just making the point that each lawfully interacting thing will have been affected by others, as for example through collisions. For that would not mean that the very *being* of one need have anything to do with the being of others. The argument for a stronger claim works by addressing objects through the natures of their kinds: Hegel argues that the *what it is* of such objects cannot be comprehended without thinking of other things, or so that it *is* what it is only in its relation with other things.⁴

It should be clear from chapter 1, above, that this kind of argument is not affected by the much greater distance that contemporary science can go in understanding things like acids and bases. We can, of course, explain

³ On this holism, see also Westphal (1989, 140–48) and Stern: "different substances are one-sided particularizations of the same universal" (1990, 81).

⁴ Contrast McTaggart's focus on particulars without portraying the point in terms of kinds (1910, 253).

neutralization in terms of underlying parts and chemical structure, without any appeal to anything like a power of an inner nature of acid. But this does nothing to change Hegel's point, since the new explanation will appeal to the lawful interactions of those underlying kinds of parts: electrons repel other electrons and attract protons, and so on. It remains true that, if anything is to be explained in lawful terms, then we must find natures somewhere within the lawful (or so Hegel argues, and we followed in chapters 1 and 2, eliminating purely subjective or contextual accounts of explanation, and "formal ground" and "real ground" accounts, leaving only immanent concepts). If so, then the natures of lawfully interacting objects will be such as to be comprehensible only in terms of their relations to others. In general, as above, if Hegel's discussion is couched in outdated scientific terms, the argument for the insubstantial holism and the explanatory incompleteness of the lawful does not depend on them.

The topic here is a *metaphysical* holism, in that it concerns the very being of lawful things, and how their (explanatory) reason is always found elsewhere. But beyond that, it can be difficult to find the right terms for the view. One might be tempted to say that such lawful things are supposed to lack any inner nature of their own. But the main problem with this terminology would be that such things are supposed to have a nature: it is their nature to interact in this and that way with others. In this sense, Hegel allows a lawful thing an *inner nature* (as I will use the term), but also adds that this inner nature is merely *relational* (as I will use that term), in that it cannot be comprehended except in terms of an "outwards reference." Or, following Marcuse's usage: it *does* have an "in-itselfness," but "the externality of being-for-other" is "constitutive" of its "in-itselfness" (1987, 54).

In calling this a form of "holism," I should clarify that I take that term to refer to views on which everything (on some domain) is what it is in virtue of relations with others. Interpreters often find in citations like those under consideration a *global* form of holism, applied to all objects. And perhaps that would be required *if* the point of the holism were at base to solve a problem concerning the knowledge of any object, or aboutness with respect to any object. But once we see the focus on the metaphysics of reason, we will see that this material concerns the holism *of the lawful*, not a holism *of all objects*. As we have seen, Hegel also gives a holist account of teleological and biological concepts. But I will argue that this is also crucially different; it will be a substantial as opposed to an insubstantial holism. In Hegel's terms, what we have with the lawfully interacting, or chemism, "is not yet for itself that totality of self-determination" (WL 6:429/645). There are crucial metaphysical differences here, even if all this will find a place within the unified method, and so a kind of all-encompassing epistemology, of the *Logic* itself.

Hegel's holism of the lawful can seem distressing, and it is important to understand why. Consider three expressions of this distress from more recent metaphysics. One case is Russell, who recognizes a kind of philosophical pressure pushing toward holism in discussing lawful things, even while he insists that this holism is obviously false:

There are many possible ways of turning some things hitherto regarded as "real" into mere laws concerning the other things. Obviously there must be a limit to this process, or else all the things in the world will merely be each other's washing. (1927, 325)

A second case is Armstrong, who notes the pressure toward holism: "physical objects . . . show a distressing tendency to dissolve into relations that one object has to another" (1993, 282). Finally, there is Chalmers:

physical theory only characterizes its basic entities *relationally*, in terms of their causal and other relations to other entities . . . and so on forever. . . . One might be attracted to the view of the world as pure causal flux, with no further properties for the causation to relate, but this would lead to a strangely insubstantial view of the physical world. (1996, 153)

Chalmers concludes that a world of causal relations, without anything independent to stand in those relations, is "arguably logically impossible, as there is nothing in such a world for causation to relate" (154).⁵

Note that the contemporary discussions go very far in agreeing with Hegel's orientation, which then forms the background of their disagreement with him. First, as in Hegel, the metaphysical issues remain alive to this day—the issues concern the very natures of things. Further, all agree on something at least in the direction of immanent concepts: they agree that the natures of things are such as to be *characterizable* (Chalmers) or *comprehensible* or *begreiflich* (Hegel). For the disagreement concerns whether these natures are characterizable or comprehensible *only in terms of relations with others*. Hegel answers in the affirmative, at least with regard to the lawfully interacting. Recently many argue that this answer is "distressing" (Armstrong), or a "strangely insubstantial" view of the physical (Chalmers), or even "obviously" false (Russell). To understand Hegel, we need to ask why he endorses a view that is so distressing, or the "insubstantial holism" (as I will call it) of the lawful.

⁵ Compare also Brandom arguing for the impossibility of an analogous form of semantic holism (2001, 71).

7.2 The Antinomy of the Lawful and the Unnecessary Substrate

It turns out that the distress about Hegel's view stems from taking up the perspective of the understanding, or from the sort of foundationalism involved specifically in what Hegel would call "the metaphysics of the understanding." The root of the problem requiring greater substantiality for the lawful, then, is that it assumes a dual demand—that an explanatory regress must end with something that is both (i) a substrate corresponding to a final subject of judgment and (ii) an explainer for that regress. Consider a regress of dispositions. For example, an acid has the disposition to neutralize a base. And this is because an acid is composed of a certain arrangement of parts that have dispositions of their own, and that are composed of further parts, etc. We can now frame an antinomy:

The thesis argument here will demonstrate that there must be some underlying non-dispositional substrate for all dispositions—and more generally a non-relational substrate for all relational properties. The basic idea proceeds from (i) the demand for a final subject or substratum: there must be a true subject-predicate judgment attributing *all* of the dispositions and relational properties in the regress, and there must be something corresponding to the subject in that true judgment. To think this final subject away would be to leave nothing to realize the dispositions—"nothing in such a world for causation to relate" (Chalmers 1996, 154). So just as Kant's thesis argument of the Second Antinomy contends that there cannot be composition without ultimate "subjects of all composition" (A436/B464), here the thesis argument would demand *subjects of all dispositionality*, or more generally *of all relationality*. Note that this is not to demand something absolutely bare; such a substrate might well have properties, so long as these are absolutely bare of dispositionality and more generally relationality.

The antithesis argument will demonstrate that there cannot be any such non-dispositional and non-relational substrate. Assume for the sake of argument that there is such a substrate or final subject. Given part (ii) of the dual demand, this substrate would have to explain the dispositions and all relational properties resting on it. The substrate would be supposed to explain, for example, why something resting on it above has the disposition to dissolve in water. But then something about that substrate is such that its nature is to produce a disposition when arranged in a certain way. It is by nature disposed, when arranged in a certain way, to produce a disposition in the whole to, for example, dissolve in water. But then the non-dispositional substrate is dispositional—which is just as contradictory as a divisible but also simple part. Thus, we must reject our assumption, and deny the existence of the substrate of all dispositionality.

Note that this case fits Hegel's conception of an antinomy, but not Kant's. It does not fit Kant's because the difficulty here has nothing to do with *application* of a legitimate conception of the unconditioned or the idea to the *ill-fitting domain of a spatio-temporal world*. This antinomy is rather rooted in an inconsistent conception of reasons and their completeness. So there is no help to be had here by limiting our knowledge and preserving a coherent idea, belief, or similar. There is nothing left here in which we might coherently even believe: any final substrate for the lawful would be indifferent to its lawful behavior; any explainer of the lawful behavior would not be a final substrate; so the attempt to frame a concept of something as both is incoherent.

But this does not leave us torn between the two parts of the dual demand. If a true final substrate would be not only unknowable but also of no conceivable explanatory interest, or interest to reason, then there are no grounds remaining to posit its existence, or to take the notion seriously in a sense such that it might articulate any genuine restriction on our knowledge.⁶ So there is a legitimate rational interest in explaining things, and this includes an interest in dispositions; but it is a mistake to assume that explanatory considerations could support the claim that a disposition must have an explanation in terms of something non-dispositional. The demand for *that* is a demand for a substrate that could not explain; it would be supported only by the mere assumption that reality matches the form of sp-judgment; and this assumption would cause incoherence in our very thoughts about reasons and their completion.

We can understand in these terms some confusions in recent metaphysics, and in particular why Blackburn (1990) seems pulled in conflicting directions, ends up talking about grounds that do not ground anything, and draws an equivocal conclusion. In short, this is because he uses the term "ground" in a sense that waivers between the incompatible meanings of substratum and reason, or the two sides of the dual demand.

One argument in Blackburn gives the antithesis case against the possibility of a non-dispositional (or "categorical") ground for a disposition. We can now see that he is worried here about "ground" in the sense of (ii) an *explainer or reason* why something is disposed as it is. There can't be such an ultimate categorical ground (G) for a disposition (D); for if there were then

[p]resumably . . . there is a law whereby *G* supports *D* and this law imputes a power to *G*. So it ought to need a separate categorical ground, *G**, it being in virtue of *G** that *G* gives rise to *D* in the worlds that obey this law. But then the power of *G**, to bring it about that *G* gives rise to *D*, will itself need a ground, and so forever.

⁶ See also a similar claim in Longuenesse: "it is not true that once the relation of opposition is established, objects subsist, unfazed, outside this relation" (2007, 63).

On the other hand, remarkably, Blackburn also argues against the coherence of making do with only dispositions all the way down, without such categorical grounds. But this is less surprising once we see that what is driving him in this second argument is a concern with “grounds” now not in the sense of (ii) explainers but of (i) substrata. The result is a version of the thesis argument above. More specifically, the worry that allowing only dispositions all the way down leaves us without any truth is a worry that there is nothing here for anything for true judgments to be true *of* or *about*, or nothing to correspond to the subject in judgment: all truths about a purely dispositional world would “vanish into truths about yet other neighbouring worlds, and the result is that there is no truth anywhere” (1990, 64).

The second argument seems to suggest the need for categorical properties as grounds, and Blackburn follows a common path in arguing that we can at least conceive a kind of property that could play that role, but only in taking a “subjective” view. Take pain, for example: here it seems that we can set aside all of the dispositional aspects of pain, and still have something left—namely, what it feels like to be in pain. So Blackburn says:

[c]ategoricity in fact comes with the subjective view: there is nothing dispositional, to the subject, in the onset of a pain or a flash in the visual field. (1990, 65)

One possibility, then, would be a line of thought along these lines: things must have underlying categorical properties; these could only be subjective properties like feeling pain; so all substances in fact have such subjective properties. Recent arguments in favor of taking panpsychism seriously, as in Chalmers (1996), are similar. Kant’s interpretation of Leibniz’s case for the conclusion that all substance thinks is also similar:

every substance must have inner determinations. . . . Yet what can I think of as inner accidents except for those which my inner sense offers me?—namely that which is either itself **thinking** or which is analogous to one. (A266/B322)

Blackburn stops well before this point, however, as he runs into a difficulty rooted in his own initial version of the antithesis argument: subjective properties as grounds would not, remarkably, ground anything. In his terms:

The trouble now is that such events, conceived of as categorical, play no role in a scientific understanding of the world; they certainly do not serve to ground anything. (1990, 65)

Having argued in these divergent directions, Blackburn's own final sentence is highly equivocal:

It almost seems that carelessness and inattention alone afford a remedy—the remedy of course of allowing ourselves to have any idea at all of what could fill in space. (1990, 65)

If we think in terms of these difficulties about grounds that do not ground, it is easy to see why Hegel takes his argument in “Chemism” for holism to be so decisive. He argues that we can only conceive of any substance for lawful things that is atomistic—“reflected into itself and therefore distinct from its reflectedness outwards”—only at the cost of conceiving of it as “an indifferent *basis*, the individual not yet determined as non-indifferent” (WL 6:430/646). The problem with this is not just that we sought an account of the lawfully interacting and came up with an account of something not interacting but indifferent. The problem is this: the demand for such an atomistic basis could never provide anything like a reason or an explainer; it is based on the mere assumption that reality mirrors judgment; and the demand pushes to antinomial conflicts. Hegel instead rejects the atomistic basis, and concludes that, for the lawful, “the being of one object is the being of another” (WL 6:430/646). More generally, thinking about the case of dispositions helps to explain why we should generally reject the demand for substrata and seek to reconceive of any remaining demand for explicability in line with that rejection.

It is worth noting some connections here. First, consider Della Rocca's (2010, 7) contemporary defense of the PSR, arguing that we must either: accept the principle; reject all arguments turning on a demand for explanation, including those which seem obviously convincing; or provide some principled line between acceptable and unacceptable explicability arguments. I have argued above that Kant has a principled line: his limitation of knowledge implies that we should accept arguments demanding a cause within the spatio-temporal limits of our knowledge, and reject arguments demanding grounds that would fall outside those limits, even while ceding that reason itself makes this limit seem counter-intuitive and those arguments seem tempting. And now we are pursuing Hegel's alternative principled line, which is no longer an epistemic limitation of the metaphysics of reason, but rather a way of accepting it in a revised form: reject arguments, like Della Rocca's argument for categorical grounds of dispositions (2–3), which demand substrata, even if the form of judgment makes them tempting; accept only arguments demanding explanations and even complete explanations, so long as these are reconceived so as to be free of confusions between reasons and substrata.

Second, we are now in the neighborhood of an important recent interpretation of Kant's account of things in themselves. Langton (1998) notes some advantages and disadvantages of reading Kant's "thing in itself" as "bare substratum" (28ff.) and then settles on a different but nearby interpretation: Kant holds that things must have some properties underlying all their relational properties, or some inner properties; and Kant (Langton says) defends something like Hegel's indifference claim, rendering the inner properties entirely inert, unable to affect anything else, and for that reason unknowable; and this is the sense in which Kant denies that we can know things as they are in themselves. Langton defends the philosophical strength of the view, in part, by noting tensions (similar to the above) within recent metaphysics, including Blackburn (1990, 182ff.). I think that this form of Kantianism—whether or not it is Kant's own—would play into the hands of Hegel's attack on substrata. But I will not here assume Langton's interpretation of Kant. I will argue that Hegel has a compelling response to Kant regardless of how we interpret Kant's claims about things in themselves.

We can now understand why it would be a mistake to understand Hegel's holism of the lawful as a kind of monism, with which it might otherwise be confused. By "monism," in general, I mean views asserting at least some kind of priority of the whole to the parts (on some domain). One could try to construct an argument for metaphysical monism that would use Russell's insistence that there must be more than things that are "each other's washing," decoupled from his view that this "more" would have to be multiple:

- (i) There must be some further substance to the physical world, over and above relational properties, in the form of something for causation to relate.
- (ii) Distinct and lawfully related things cannot have any substance apart from relational properties within a whole network.
- (iii) Thus, the only place for the additional substance is underlying the whole network, and the physical world must be one single substance.

But it is crucial that this monism cannot be Hegel's view. For Hegel's view, unsurprisingly, lies much farther from Russell's. It is irrelevant to Hegel's arguments against substance-as-substratum whether the substrata are supposed to be singular or plural. Hegel is arguing *against* premise (i) here, even if metaphysicians like Russell might endorse it. Hegel argues that substance in *that* sense would be indifferent, and not the ground of anything, or capable of having anything depend on it. Note, further, that Hegel interprets Spinoza's monism in similar terms (§6.4): Spinoza's arguments should push him toward such a substance-as-substratum monism; and (Hegel holds) the result is an

indifferent, indeterminate One, and the elimination of all determinacy. Hegel seeks to resist that conclusion. So Hegel's point concerning the lawful is not to demand a single substrate or final subject as the substance for lawful reality as a whole. On the contrary, Hegel's point is that there is no such substance to the lawful at all: neither in the parts nor the whole. His position on the lawful is rather *insubstantial* holism, in this respect.

But, note that, for reasons above, this is not to say that Hegel denies that there is any substance anywhere. This is another respect in which Hegel is farther from Russell, who seems to assume that a denial of substance to everything governed by laws of nature would be a denial of the substance of "all the things in the world." It is easy to assume that, if there is substance to things, then this would be found at the bottom, as it were: with physical reality or below it. But Hegel is reversing foundationalism, arguing that substances are found higher rather than lower, or later rather than sooner; he will argue that physical reality provides the insubstantial material out of which genuine substances are built, in teleological cases, where the concept provides the substance.

In any case, for the lawful, we can easily see insubstantial holism in the text of the *Logic*. For example, Hegel does hold that a lawfully interacting thing presupposes the whole of all of them: it "is the concrete moment of the individual concept [*Begriff*] of the whole" (WL 6:430/646). But it is crucial that this is equally true of the whole of the lawful: it merely presupposes the nodes connected in the whole network. That is: for the lawful there is no priority of the whole over the parts. Thus "Chemism," at the end, "still presupposes, together with the differentiated nature of the objects, the immediate self-sufficiency of those same objects" (EL §202). Similarly, if Hegel were arguing for a monism of the lawful, then this would be to reveal an *intrinsic* or *internal* connection between kinds or forms. By contrast, all we find in Hegel's treatment of the lawful is "[t]he process . . . of passing back and forth from one form into the other, forms that at the same time still remain external" (EL §202). Or: "chemism" is "still burdened . . . by the immediate self-subsistence of the object and with externality" (WL 6:434/649). The point is that, within the lawfully interacting, or objects structured by lawful reasons or explanations, we find everywhere only this dependence on others, or these relational features—when we look to the parts we find dependence on others within the whole, and when we look to the whole we find dependence on parts.

It is worth distinguishing two kinds of distress about this. One is the concern that there is nothing here that is independent of such relational features. Hegel recognizes the distress, but takes it to be an expression of the metaphysics of the understanding. Since we will always have to employ judgments, the distress will always be with us: "the *metaphysics of the past* . . . is always on hand, as the *perspective of the understanding alone* on the objects of reason"

(EL §27). But we are supposed to learn to stop trusting this distress, and any demand for substrata as opposed to reasons. This leaves us with insubstantial holism. And that brings us to a different distress: there is within the lawful no independent form of reason; objects here (or the “chemical object”) can be reasons only in a sense that merely depends on others, and so on; and the whole can similarly be a reason only in a sense that is dependent on its differentiation. Hegel accepts this as a more philosophically serious concern. But it is not justification for thinking that the lawful must contain some hidden explanatory completeness. Rather, it is justification for concluding that there is something incomplete about the lawful itself—so that an inquiry into completeness of reasons *must* turn instead to teleology. And Hegel is now beginning to argue that whenever we try to preserve a claim for the complete explicability of everything, we think we are reaching for a conception of complete reason for everything and end up instead with only a form of substrate for everything; the only way to even conceive of a complete reason will turn out to involve conceiving the completely explicable as built out of the incompletely explicable, and the substantial as built out of the insubstantial.

7.3 The Real Contradiction of the Lawful

Hegel frequently proposes that the correct response to the contradictions of Kant’s Antinomies is not a limitation of our knowledge, but rather Hegel’s own famous assertion of the reality of contradictions. Although this assertion has always been difficult for interpreters, we are now in a position to understand at least one of Hegel’s cases of real contradiction: the contradiction of the lawful. Note, however, that this is not yet a comprehensive account; it is not yet an account of the contradiction within life, nor Hegel’s claim that everything contains contradiction (§10.2). But it is a start.

We can begin by considering again more recent metaphysics. Some are tempted to argue that it is not even logically possible to have physical reality exhausted by a regress of dispositions. Chalmers worries that “a world of pure causal flux . . . is arguably logically impossible, as there is nothing in such a world for causation to relate” (1996, 154). But efforts to demonstrate logical impossibility in one way or another tend to be met by rejoinders. Blackburn’s focus on truth, noted above, employs a counterfactual analysis of dispositions; Holton shows that, even working in these terms, there is no logical inconsistency, only something just as “hard to get our minds around” (1999, 13) as is much of physics. Bird finds the biggest challenge to a “Regress of Pure Powers” (2007) to concern the identities of the relata standing in relations, but answers with a graph-theoretical account. We can think of Hegel’s position as

occupying a surprising middle ground here. Hegel certainly does not take the logical impossibility view. Hegel holds that lawful reality *is* relational through and through. But Hegel also argues that we must be careful with the view that the lawful is thoroughly relational, lest we lose track of the degree to which, and the sense in which, it is strange or distressing; we should recognize that what we are defending is the reality of a kind of real contradiction, albeit not one that rules out logical possibility.

Hegel's view of the lawful can seem to posit the reality of relations, but without *relata*. And this can seem to be a contradiction, as if we are first affirming and then denying the relations. And that is indeed a good way to begin to work toward Hegel's view, which is that the lawful has features which are such as to make attempts to capture it in judgments inevitably result in a judgment that is both true and false.

To see the point, imagine a simplified case in which all there is to reality are lawful kinds X and Y. X lawfully does *p* to Y. And that is all. Now consider the judgment: *X does p to Y*. This will be both true and false. It is true: it states the real relation to Y that, in this imagined scenario, would exhaust X's own concept or nature, leaving nothing to X that is independent of Y. But it is also false: given the form of the judgment, it means in part that there is some X, something corresponding to the subject-place in the judgment, and so something independent enough of the relation to Y to then stand in that relation. So there is something real here, some real feature of reality tensed *against* itself, ready to react in lawful ways, which is such as to make the same judgment both true and false. This is best recognized, Hegel argues, as real contradiction. But this does not rule out logical possibility, given Hegel's case against the assumption that reality must accord with the form of judgment, or his case against the metaphysics of the understanding. Thus, Hegel can continue to recognize the reality of precisely the feature that some philosophers would (mistakenly) take to be logically impossible: the feature of being such as to make judgments attempting to completely express it inevitably both true and false.

It is crucial that the contradiction in question is *not* this: reality is one, but the inadequate perspective of the understanding makes reality seem rather like a mutually independent many. This would not be a contradiction in reality, but a contradiction merely introduced by an inadequate perspective on reality. If the point were that everything lawful is, in truth, one, then reality would not be such as to inevitably leave us with a judgment both true and false. We could just capture reality in a judgment of this sort: the whole network is composed of the relation between X and Y, Y, and X, and so on. But Hegel's point is that this judgment too would be both true and false: It would be true because there is such a network. It would be false because the form of judgment would force the implication that there is such a whole, corresponding to the subject of this

judgment, independent of its relation to the parts. But looking at “Chemism,” we have seen that the point is not that everything lawful is one, nor even that there is a priority of the one whole network of laws over the nodes of lawful kinds. On the contrary, the parts presuppose the whole, *which itself presupposes the differentiation of the mutually external or different parts*. Thus, chemism, again, still has “forms that at the same time still remain external” (EL §202). Hegel stresses this in the explanation of contradiction in this section. On the one hand, the “determinateness” of any chemical or lawfully interacting object is just a “moment” of a “whole”: it “is the concrete moment of the individual concept [*Begriff*] of the whole” (WL 6:430/646). But, on the other hand, *the whole itself merely presupposes the differentiated kinds*, or depends on their differentiation as a kind of *positedness*; it depends on but does not explain there being distinct elements entering into relations. And so chemism contains this real contradiction: “[t]he chemical object . . . is thus the contradiction of its immediate positedness and its immanent individual concept” (WL 4:430/646). Lecture notes on this material discuss acids and bases, again noting the real contradiction in their independence and dependence on relations: “they exist outside each other, each is one-sided and yet is upon itself the totality. This is the contradiction” (VL 203/205).

It is easy to see the other features of this view in Hegel’s text. First, the key point about the metaphysics of the understanding is that it cannot accept this reality of the contradiction:

This metaphysics became *dogmatism* because, due to the nature of the finite determinations, it had to assume that of *two opposite assertions* [*entgegengesetzten Behauptungen*] . . . one had to be *true* while the other was *false*. (EL §32)⁷

Further, the “Contradiction” chapter of the WL emphasizes this kind of case in which opposite kinds of things are nonetheless constituted by relations to one another.⁸ Hegel claims that we overlook the real contradiction here because

⁷ See also Stern (1990, 57) on this limitation of the understanding. For another account of Hegel on the understanding’s role in contradiction see Beiser (2005, 164), although I deny that the perspective of the whole (in cases like that of the lawful) resolves the contradiction.

⁸ There would, of course, be more to say in a complete treatment of this earlier material. For instance, there are other important questions about the connections to Kant. See, for example, Wolff’s approach (1999) by comparison also with Kant’s essay on negative magnitudes, and de Boer’s (2010a) by comparison with the Amphiboly. I don’t mean here to reject either connection, but only to argue that, however the many further interpretive questions are answered, this should be with an eye to the broader context of the *Logic* endeavor to respond specifically to the account of reason in the Dialectic of the first *Critique*. There are certainly many further questions that I do

representation (*Vorstellung*) encourages us to forget that such kinds are independent only to the extent that they are also exhausted by relations, and so by their dependence on others:

Opposites entail contradiction inasmuch as, in negatively *referring* to each other, they *sublate each other reciprocally* and are *indifferent* to each other. Ordinary thought [*Vorstellung*] . . . forgets there the negative unity of the opposites and therefore holds on to them only as “different” in general. (WL 6:76/383)

But if we do not overlook or forget, then we see real contradiction:

there do exist at least a *great many* contradictory things, contradictory dispositions etc., of which the contradiction is present not in any external reflection but right in them. (WL 6:75–6/382)

In the EL discussion, Hegel refers to physics studying the relation of opposite *polarities*: physics discovers these relations; but it overlooks the way these scientific results suggest a violation of the “ordinary logic” to which physics tries to keep (EL §119R). Note the connection the notion (§1.7) that physics succeeds at natural science, but unknowingly steps into philosophy in interpreting its own successes, and then makes mistakes—for example, interpreting its forces and laws as independent objects, external to the concepts of things. That is just what hides mutual dependence of lawful kinds, and so real contradiction, involved in the lawful relations successfully discovered by physics itself.⁹

One reason why it can be difficult to make sense of Hegel’s claim for the reality of contradiction, in this case and others, is that this seems to present a dilemma: On the one hand, if we really *explain* the view, or render it thinkable, then we seem to undercut the sense in which reality would contain *contradiction* within it; we make reality seem to make more sense than it would if

not try to answer here. For example, Wolff addresses a kind of question in the conceptual foundations of formal logic, seeing in Hegel the view that contradiction, in many more familiar senses, rests on or presupposes the real contradiction of interest to Hegel.

⁹ An interesting comparison is de Boer’s claim that Hegel is not denying the validity of the principle of non-contradiction “insofar as the natural sciences are concerned,” but only with respect to his “method intended to comprehend modes of thought—rather than ‘things’” (2010a, 346). In a sense, I agree: natural science as such is not supposed to need to note or better understand the real contradiction in things. But, on my account, natural science does fall into error in missing the real contradiction; this is because the error natural science makes occurs when it ventures into philosophical interpretation of its objects. So I would say rather that philosophical consideration, attentive to the real contradiction, targets both thoughts *and things*, or things structured by forms of reason in the world.

really contradictory. On the other hand, if we insist on the reality of a kind of contradiction that could never make sense or be explained, beyond the grasp of thought, then we seem to suggest one or another view that, although possibly of philosophical appeal in some respects, cannot cohere with Hegel's other commitments (chapter 5): Hegel rejects the idea that reality is such that we can never comprehend or know it; and he rejects the view that reality is such that it could be comprehended and known only by leaping beyond thought into a kind of immediate grasp of the contradictoriness of things.

My view is that the interpretive difficulties with the latter route—the beyond of thought—are unsolvable: epistemic optimism and the rejection of pure immediacy are too crucial to Hegel's overall endeavor; the *Logic* is simply *not* arguing that there is something beyond thought.¹⁰ There is only what is beyond the understanding and not beyond reason. And reason, for Hegel here, has nothing to do with leaping beyond a discontinuity into something only accessible to an immediate grasp of reality all at once, or into inexpressible feeling, or the like.¹¹ So Hegel is not arguing that our thinking seeks something and always falls into contradiction in seeking this, thus coming up short of its legitimate aim. That would make this of thought into something beyond thought. And this cannot fit with Hegel's epistemic optimism.

So I think that the way forward is to embrace and redeem the first horn of the seeming dilemma: to explain the real contradiction, or make sense of it. My interpretation may consequently seem, to those who favor views on which there is a beyond of thought, to go too far toward removing the contradiction from the world.¹² I am happy to be criticized on this score, if the criticism reconciles a beyond of thought with Hegel's epistemic optimism and dismissal of

¹⁰ Similarly, whatever the philosophical attractions of Priest's view, I would not say that it is Hegel's view that there is a true infinite that is both beyond the limits of thought, and yet also not beyond (1995, 120). Hegel is an epistemic optimist and denies such limits. In the cited passages, Hegel is criticizing Kant's attempt to establish a limit, arguing that Kant also violates the limit in claiming it. This is not for Hegel to endorse the view that there both are and are not limits of thought.

¹¹ I find the most compelling view moving more in the latter direction to be Redding's (2007, 236): "Hegel was committed to the project of rendering the whole 'felt' in mystical experience explicit, and in this project was happy to embrace the consequences of attempting to say what was otherwise shown in the logic of reason's material implications." This is a compelling view, but as an interpretation of Hegel seems to me to face both worries above: *either* the *feeling* is an accurate grasp of the target at which our sayings ought to aim, which seems to me an appeal to the immediate knowledge that the mature Hegel excludes; *or* we leave off with only the fact that we ought to infinitely strive to better say what we cannot in principle say, conflicting with Hegel's epistemic optimism.

¹² Something like this rejoinder to my interpretation is offered as a rejoinder to Hegel himself by Inwood (1983, 450).

pure immediacy. Since I have argued that there is no possible reconciliation of these, I conclude that Hegel's view is this: reason or explanatory thinking can make sense of reality, but that what we thus comprehend is such as to make the same judgment both true and false, leaving something real that is itself such as to reveal the limits of the understanding, insofar as the understanding cannot accept this reality of contradiction.

We can see the importance of this emphasis on reason in Hegel's own explanation of why recognizing real contradictions is supposed to be so important for philosophy: it is supposed to be required to build a better account of the completeness of reasons. In part, this connection between contradiction and Hegel's *method* raises problems that I cannot fully address until chapter 10. But we can make a start here. Kant is supposed to be correct that our thinking inevitably concerns a topic—the completeness of reasons—that will lead us into antinomial contradictions:

The realization that the dialectic makes up the very nature of thinking and that as understanding it is bound to land in the negative of itself, i.e. in contradiction, constitutes a cardinal aspect of logic.
(EL §11R)

But when our attempts to think things through run into contradiction, we must not conclude that thinking is limited (Hegel will call this “misology”). We must not conclude that our thought is in principle restricted, or that inquiry can grasp the reality at which it aims only by jumping beyond thought and into an immediate grasp or feeling. Rather, we must and can take engagement with these contradictions as a necessary task for philosophy, and think our way through them:

thinking did not need to fall into the *misology* . . . of acting polemically against itself as happens when the so-called *immediate knowing* is declared to be the *exclusive* form in which we may become conscious of the truth. (EL §11R)

What is supposed to be so important about recognizing real contradiction is that this would allow Kant's insight from the antinomies, better *carried through*, to clarify things for *reason*, now freed from the mere perspective of the *understanding*:

when not carried through, this insight runs into the misconception that reason is the one that contradicts itself; it fails to see that the contradiction is in fact the elevation of reason above the restrictions of the understanding and the dissolution of them. (WL 5:39/26)

So the contradictions are not a limit to all thought; they are a limit to understanding, but not a limit to reason. And attention to the contradictions is supposed to allow reason to elevate itself above the limits of the understanding, into a better comprehension of the completeness of reasons.

Why should recognizing the reality of contradiction help reason? Consider first why Kant's different path is supposed to be counter-productive: Kant limits our knowledge by the forms of space and time, and then this leads him astray insofar as he proceeds to try to think of the unconditioned or complete reason as a kind of *inverse image* of determinate things within the bounds of sensibility; this leaves Kant open to the mistake of thinking that even a bare or indeterminate substrate or final subject would be of interest to reason, or a form of the unconditioned; for the lack of determinacy will now seem no strike against it, since this lack of determinacy *is* the inverse image of the determinacy of objects within the bounds of sense. So Hegel says that Kant's response to antinomies empties reason of determinacy: "Knowing is indeed *determining* and *determinate* thinking. If reason is merely empty, indeterminate thinking, it thinks *nothing*" (EL §48R). In Hegel's terms, Kant proceeds by means of a kind of "formal thought" and "abstract negation" from the contradictions of the antinomies:

The firm principle that formal thinking lays down for itself here is that contradiction cannot be thought. . . . Formal thought does in fact think it, only it at once looks away from it and stating its principle it only passes over from it into abstract negation. (WL 6:562–3/745)

The alternative is what Hegel will call "determinate negation." In short, once we recognize the antinomial contradictions as real, as for example in the case of the lawful, we can think them through in a way that will teach us how to refine and improve ever better *determinate* successor conceptions of the completeness of reasons or the idea. So the next test for Hegel here is whether he can draw out of his account of the insubstantiality of the lawful a better account of the completeness of reasons—and an account that will render the completeness of reasons comprehensible and even knowable for us.

The Idea: Complete Reason as Process

The Idea, which is the reason within an object. . . .

—Hegel, PR §2

We saw above Hegel’s case for the conclusion that real but incomplete explicability is best understood in terms of concepts or natures that lack explanatory import of their own. Hegel will argue, then, that more complete explainers should be understood in terms of concepts that do carry explanatory import of their own. But that can seem impossible. Within the lawful, anyway, it is not. We could, of course, imagine some otherworldly inverse image of the lawful and imagine this as super powerful. But that would not help to comprehend how any of this is really possible, let alone to establish knowledge that there is any such thing. So the challenge for Hegel’s account of “the idea,” or more complete reason, is to explain how this can be comprehended and known, so that a systematically revised metaphysics can be reconstructed on that basis. And understanding this is the challenge for us as we turn to try to interpret the transition to the final section of the Logic, “The Idea.”

Hegel’s theory is easiest to approach (§8.1) in terms of his claim that “the idea is, *first of all, life*” (WL 6:468/675). Given Hegel’s account of life, we can indeed understand why biological concepts carry more explanatory import of their own: unlike the lawful, what a living being does can be more completely explained in terms of a nature of its own kind or *Begriff*, in the form of the characteristic ways of serving the immanent end of self-preservation. Here the explanatory import of the concept is more complete than any mere step in a regress, or a mere infinite regress.

But it is crucial at this point (§8.2) to move away from the specifics of life and grasp the *Logic's* general account of *the idea*. The best way to do this is just to abstract away from life's specific inner purpose of self-preservation, requiring only *some* inner purpose. The result is this:

The idea = a reciprocal process of concept and individual instances sufficient to establish the inner purposiveness of an end, and to establish the concept as the substance of an individual.

In terms of this demand for the reciprocal process of concept and existing individual instances, we can make sense of the canonical formulations of the section "The Idea": "the idea is the unity of the concept and objectivity" or "the unity of concept and reality."¹

A striking feature of this theory, crucial to Hegel's overall position, is that the existence of the idea *must necessarily depend* on its being realized in something that is not a form of the idea; or, the completely explicable must depend on its being realized in the incompletely explicable. So we should not understand reasons and their completeness in terms of dependence and lack of dependence. And clearly this theory falls very far from a metaphysical foundationalism. Hegel defends something like a turtle with a jetpack, but only one that must be itself composed of strands of turtles all the way down (§8.3).

We can then understand how Hegel seeks to reconstruct metaphysics generally on the basis of Kant's own considerations from the Dialectic, carrying this through to an account of substance in terms of the idea (§8.4). And this account of substance is in fact one guiding thread throughout the argument of the whole *Logic* (§8.5).

8.1 The Idea Is, First of All, Life

The easiest way to understand the transition to "The Idea" is by looking to paradigmatic cases of lesser and greater explanatory completeness from before and after the transition: the lawful and life.

Consider again the explanatory regress of the lawful: A lawful thing is such that what it does cannot be comprehended in terms of its own kind, but only in terms of the relations between its kind and others, and eventually the whole network of everything else lawfully related. Even the whole network can only be understood in terms of its relations to its parts.² Here we find only regress,

¹ WL 6:464/671 and 6:466/673, respectively.

² See §8.2 and especially (EL §202).

without any point at which there is anything more completely explicable in terms of its own nature or kind.

Contrast living beings, according to Hegel's account of life. Part of what distinguishes a tiger, for example—call him Hobbes—is the specific way in which he uses his claws to climb, to catch the deer present in his environment, and so on. We can ask why Hobbes has, say, the capacity to catch those deer. And, granted, here we can find a kind of regress: he has the power to catch them, in part, because his claws have the power to slice. We can even follow a regress into the underlying stuff, looking at whatever powers make the underlying stuff able to remain rigid and sharp. But here we do not get sucked into the same chains of dependence without any possible end. It is not the case that the only answer is: all that it is to be this kind of tiger is to catch deer of this kind. Nor is the only answer the one that would follow the regress into the underlying kinds of stuff and a network of laws. For there is a kind of stopping point referring to the tiger itself (to its kind): it has claws, and the power to slice, and these underlying stuffs are arranged in this way, *because* of the contribution that all this makes to the tiger's own immanent end or telos of self-preservation. That is, after all, why this particular underlying stuff is present and so arranged within this tiger at all. So the inner purposiveness of an organism allows its nature to be found in the determinate ways that it relates to the environment, yet without its nature being for this reason merely dissolved away into relations.

With respect to these kinds of examples, there is an extremely direct statement of the basic contrast in the "Reason" section in the *Phenomenology*. An organism is "the real end [*Zweck*] itself. . . . [I]t preserves *itself* in the relation to an other" (PhG §256). A lawful thing, in contrast to the loving, does not preserve itself in relation to others, but "gets lost":

[t]he distinguishing marks of animals, e.g., are taken from their claws and teeth. . . . [E]ach animal itself *separates* itself from others thereby. . . . What, however, stands on a still lower level cannot itself any longer distinguish itself from another, but in being contrasted with it gets lost. (PhG §246).³

This same basic contrast is drawn in considerably more abstract terms in the *Logic*, contrasting teleology or purpose with lawful causes or necessity. A *cause*, in the narrow sense involving "blind necessity," might initially seem to be something independent, or with the power of itself to *originate* something;

³ Abstracting from complications concerning the distinction between plants and animals.

but it turns out that a lawful cause only does anything in virtue of lawful relations with its effects, or as merely “posited” by an “other.” Hegel says:

The cause pertains to the not yet uncovered, blind necessity; for this reason it appears to pass over into its other and lose its originality in it in the course of being posited. (EL §204R)

And Hegel immediately offers a contrast: what belongs in the order of necessary causes dissolves away into “being-other”; something purposive or teleological will itself determine or originate its efficacy and does not get lost but preserves itself in what it does:

The purpose, by contrast, is posited as *in itself* the determinacy, or what there [in efficient causality] still appears as being-other contains the effect [here], so that, in its efficacy, it does not pass over [into something else] but instead *preserves itself*. That is to say, it brings about itself alone and is, in the *end*, what it was in the *beginning*, in the original state. What is truly original is so only by means of this self-preservation. (EL §204R)⁴

So inner purposiveness, as for example in life, accounts for a kind of greater explanatory completeness. This is not to say that life provides the only case, nor an absolute case, of explanatory completeness. We will look at limitations of the explanatory completeness of life in considering the absolute idea, below. For now, life is crucial insofar as it is Hegel’s central example of greater explanatory completeness than any mere step in a regress, and so also the direction, as it were, in which absolute completeness of explanation will lie.

8.2 The General Account of the Idea

Understanding the discussion of life in the *Logic* already required focusing just on the general end of self-preservation, abstracting from the empirical details about how different forms of life serve that end. To understand the *Logic*’s general account of the idea, in the introductory material for that section, we need to abstract further, away from the end of self-perseveration.⁵ What makes possible inner purposiveness, *of any end*, and so in general concepts or natures

⁴ Since this is the “Teleology” chapter, this remains a desideratum until the later “Life” chapter resolves Kant’s problem, or shows that inner purposiveness is comprehensible and knowable.

⁵ In approaching “the idea” via life, I share a general strategy with Marcuse (1987, 144ff.).

with explanatory import of their own, is the reciprocal relation between type and token, which makes the type or concept the substance of the token individual. And Hegel is arguing throughout this material that completeness of explanation should not be understood as something wholly other or utterly transcending the sort of determinateness of which we have knowledge; it should be understood in terms of the reciprocal process of concept and individual. Thus, the idea cannot be understood as only the concept: it requires an account of a special kind of realization of a concept. Nor can it be understood as an individual: it requires individuals with a special relation to their concept. Thus, the canonical formulations cited above: “the idea is the unity of the concept and objectivity” or “the unity of concept and reality.” Lecture notes elsewhere provide more detail:

the idea as such is nothing but the concept, the real existence of the concept, and the unity of the two. For the concept as such is not yet the idea. (VPA 13:145)

Hegel also makes the point in more detail where he explains the idea in terms of life, saying that the idea requires inner purposiveness, which requires the intimate relation establishing the concept as substance of individual:

the idea is, *first of all, life*. It is the concept which, distinct from its objectivity, simple in itself, permeates that objectivity and, as self-directed purpose, has its means within it and posits it as its means, yet is immanent in this means and is therein the realized purpose identical with itself. (WL 6:468/675)

In abstracting away from the details about life, Hegel puts the point about the idea, and the concept as substance, by referring to

the concept that distinguishes itself from its objectivity—but an objectivity which is no less determined by it and possesses its substantiality only in that concept. (WL 6:466/673)

Meeting the challenge left by Kant’s Dialectic with an alternative requires that Hegel’s account of the idea should lead to epistemic optimism: we must not only comprehend how it is possible, but know it as real. Consider this in light of the knowability and comprehensibility of life. *If* knowledge of the inner purposiveness of life really required knowledge of a supersensible substrate of matter, then it might follow that such knowledge requires the ability to grasp reality immediately and all at once; but we have seen the force of

Hegel's argument (contra Kant) that any substrate of matter or nature is irrelevant to the problem of natural teleology. What is required is only the ability to gain knowledge by thinking further, or drawing inferences from observations to their explainers. It is crucial that this include knowledge of explainers that would lie beyond Kant's strict bounds of sensibility—explainers that are not themselves something directly observable, or something that could in principle be given in sensible intuition, in accordance with forms of space and time. It is not just that they are too small or large for us to directly observe. They are immanent concepts neither wholly present at one spatio-temporal location, nor a formal feature of all spatio-temporal experience.⁶ So Hegel has defended the possibility of such knowledge beyond Kant's strict bounds of sensibility—but without need of anything like a superior-in-kind intellect capable of grasping reality immediately and all at once. Since life is a first form of the idea, the same account of knowledge will carry over to the latter. For the knowledge of the inner purposiveness of living beings just is knowledge of the reciprocal process establishing the intimate relation of type and token, concept and individual. And that is why Hegel's overall argument supports his epistemic optimism. It supports his rejection of Kant's pessimistic view according to which ideas are *only* ideas, in the sense that we cannot know whether they have any true realization, but can only seek knowledge of such forever without hope of achieving it. Thus, "The Idea" section says:

we must . . . definitely reject that estimate of it according to which the idea is something with no actuality, and true thoughts are accordingly said to be *only ideas*. . . .

[W]e must not regard it as just a *goal* which is to be approximated but itself remains always a kind of *beyond*. (WL 4:463–64/671)⁷

It is natural to ask whether Hegel's account of the idea is supposed to be an account specifically of the reality and knowability of *the unconditioned*. Hegel's argument itself leaves this ambiguous, just as will be the case in many arguments that a previous theory overlooks an important distinction. For we could take the term *unconditioned* either to (i) essentially refer to the completeness of reasons, or to (ii) essentially encompass both completeness of reasons and finality of substrata. In the latter sense, Hegel is rejecting the concept of the

⁶ See also Marcuse's (1987, 149) account of the relation of the idea, understood in terms of the first form of it in life, to temporality.

⁷ Strictly speaking, Hegel's gloss is misleading, since Kant does not deny actuality of ideas so much as argue this to be unknowable.

unconditioned, arguing that a final substrate would be empty, and too indifferent to be of interest to reason. Thus, in discussing Kant, Hegel says:

What is here called object of reason, namely the *unconditioned* or the *infinite*, is nothing but the self-same. . . . The acquaintances with things, gathered from experience, do not measure up to this identity utterly *devoid of determinateness*, since they are in any case findings of a *determinate* content. (EL §45)

So if the question is whether Hegel is defending the knowability of “the unconditioned” in *this* Kantian sense, then the answer is “no.” But Hegel is happy, in the former sense, to appropriate the term *unconditioned*, right along with the terminology of reason and the idea, and to substitute his own account—which is both partially deflationary and also partially inflationary. So Hegel says, back in the introduction of “The Idea” section of the *Logic*, that the correct conception of the unconditioned concerns something with explanatory import of its own or something that determines itself in this respect:

The idea is the *rational* in this sense; it is the unconditioned, because only that has conditions which essentially refers to an objectivity that it does not determine itself. (WL 4:463/671)

So if “the unconditioned” simply means *complete explainer*, then we have indeed here begun to understand Hegel’s account of the unconditioned, and how we ourselves can know the unconditioned—with the caveat that we have not yet come to the absolute case, or to absolute explanatory completeness.

8.3 Complete Explainers Must Depend on the Incompletely Explicable

On this account of the idea, it is not the case that everything is a form of the idea. That said, the point is also not that some things are utterly foreign to or other than the idea. It is not that they have no concept or *Begriff* at all; rather, they do not possess it completely within them, or they get lost in relations between their concept and others. We can again initially put the point in terms of our paradigmatic cases: On Hegel’s account, the lawful is not something utterly different than the teleological; the teleological is not the abstract negation of the lawful. Rather, the lawful must be understood in terms of powers pointing in certain directions. This is not truly teleological, since there is no normative sense of malfunction in which something lawful

could fail to exercise its power in the right direction. It is more like a lesser form of what teleology is. And only with Hegel's account of the idea do we get an argument for the lawful being not merely a *different* form of what the teleological is, but really lesser: the lawful is of less complete explanatory import, or lesser interest to reason.⁸ But life also depends on there being some lawful stuff, within which to be realized.

We can understand the organization near the end of the *Logic* in terms of the lawful's approximation and falling short of the idea. We do not get the intimate type-token connection with the objects of the three chapters prior to the transition to "The Idea" section. The lawful, in cases of (i) the matter of "Mechanism," and (ii) the lawfully interacting kinds of "Chemism," fall short for reasons just noted. The turn to (iii) the "Teleology" chapter promises a change, but encounters first a problem, in that more complete reasons would not be introduced by just taking the same lawful stuff and now thinking of it in terms of merely external purposiveness, or noting the possibility that it could be used for merely external purposes; the promise of more complete explicability would require truly inner purposiveness;⁹ since Kant has a case that this is incomprehensible and unknowable, his problem will have to be solved to give an account of greater explanatory completeness. None of these chapters, prior to "The Idea," yet introduces the type-token connection that will eventually solve the problem. So Hegel notes that the topics of these three earlier sections—he places them under the heading of the "finite"—fall short of the idea:

the idea is the unity of the concept and reality. . . . Finite things are finite because, and to the extent that, they do not possess the reality of their concept completely within them but are in need of other things for it. . . . The highest to which they attain on the side of this finitude is external purposiveness. (WL 6:465/672)

Further, just as not everything is a form of the idea, Hegel's account here will not claim that all explanation requires the presence of the special self-determining reciprocal relation between concept or kind and

⁸ Itling similarly stresses the differences: "Hegel beabsichtigt nicht etwa, in allen Gestaltungen der Nature und des Geistes nur immer wieder dieselbe logische Struktur aufzuweisen" (1987, 367). Contrast McTaggart: "Chemism is an abstraction from Life, so that, wherever there is Chemism there must be Life also" (1896, 99).

⁹ On this point about the "Teleology" section, see Pippin (1991, 245) and de Vries (1991, 57–58). On my view, the "Teleology" section thereby points the way toward the need for a solution to Kant's problem, which out comes later with "The Idea" section and specifically the "Life" chapter there.

instances. For there can be lesser forms of explanatory import. Hegel's claims are these:

Explanation: any explanatory import at all requires something at some level with a concept or kind that is of explanatory import.

More complete explanation: explanatory import more complete than just a step in a regress requires a concept with its own explanatory import, which requires the reciprocal process that is the idea.

In Hegel's terms, more complete explanation involves not just any concept but an "adequate" concept, which is present only in cases of the idea:

the *adequate* concept is something higher; it properly denotes the agreement of the concept with reality, and this is not the concept as such but the *idea*. (WL 6:290/542)

The terminology here echoes Spinoza, who says that an inadequate cause is one "through which, by itself, its effect cannot be understood" (E3D1); Hegel's "adequate concept" is one that carries explanatory import of its own.

But it should seem surprising to hold that the inner purposiveness of life amounts to a greater independent explanatory import as compared to the lawful: we tend to have a foundationalist expectation that greater explanatory completeness is found with something less *dependent*, and something on which others *depend*. Yet we can understand inner purposiveness as life, we have seen, only if we see living beings as dependent on there being some underlying lawful stuff as realizer. How could something merely dependent be thereby of *greater* explanatory import?

Part of the answer concerns why this dependence does not undermine teleological explicability: because, as discussed above (§3.7), it is dependence on something merely "indifferent" (WL 5:482/685). A living being could not exist if there were not lawful stuff in which to be embodied; but the lawful stuff does not determine anything about an end or telos; it is indifferent to ends and is present in this or that arrangement on account of the end of the living being. We can now consider this old proposal in the context of Hegel's broader criticisms of our assumptions about substrata. Life is dependent in the sense of depending on an indifferent substratum, which is no concern of reason, more generally, we should not understand explanatory completeness or reason in terms of lack of dependence. Hegel is aiming for a more positive conception of reason and its completeness: not in terms of a *lack of dependence*, but in terms of *concepts with explanatory import of their own*. If the latter standard is met, then

dependence on something indifferent should be no strike against the explanatory completeness provided thereby. And that is a large step away from meta-physical foundationalism.¹⁰

But Hegel's position here is more surprising and radical still: he not only holds that something more completely explanatory *can* be dependent; he holds that it *must* be. To see why, consider one of Hegel's favorite examples: the process of digestion going on within living being. There are chemical elements within a living being, which interact with ingested stuff, breaking the latter down. But the regress of explanation here does not get dragged into an endless chain of lawful relations, because there is a termination point with the teleological: certain chemical kinds are present within the living being specifically *in order to* undergo those reactions, and specifically in a way that serves the end of self-preservation. The explanatory import rests at the teleological level, but in such a way that it is *mediated* by the underlying lawful kinds. Now imagine proposing, contra Hegel, that life would be of more complete explanatory import without the mediation or dependence. So you might propose that this kind of living being itself *immediately* possesses a vital power to break down this or that substance into others. But our supposedly strengthened biological kind would now be comprehensible only in terms of its relation with the chemical elements that it breaks down, and in terms of the relations of these elements with others, and so on. This is precisely what would entangle this kind of living being in the regress of kinds comprehensible only in terms of others, or the regress characteristic of the lawful. So a theory making life less dependent would actually make it, surprisingly, of less complete explanatory import, rather than more.

Hegel makes this case most clearly in discussing teleology generally.¹¹ If the end or purpose (*Zweck*) reacted immediately or primitively, then it would no

¹⁰ Beiser (2005, 56) may have some part of this in mind in his distinction between an order of explanation and an order of existence, so that the universal is first in order of explanation and last in order of existence (similar to my dependence). But I think that this formulation expresses rather a problem: how could something be first in explanatory import while being yet dependent on prior existents, without some form of influence backwards in time? And I think that "Life" solves the problem in terms of the intimate relation of concept and individual. But I take that solution to rule out the rationalist monism Beiser sees in Hegel, since that solution requires reproduction and struggle, rather than one single individual. We can also compare contemporary metaphysics: In many senses, Hegel's view is close to the newly popular view, often compared with Aristotle's, according to which metaphysics is about grounding and fundamentality, not just about what there is (Schaffer 2009). But Hegel would object, for the reasons above, to understanding grounding in terms of dependence, and to understanding completeness or fundamentality in terms of the lack of dependence.

¹¹ See also deVries: "teleological explanation presupposes mechanical explanation" (1991, 54).

longer be teleological but merely mechanical or chemical, and would lose its explanatory import to other kinds:

In an *immediate connection* with that object, purpose would itself enter into the sphere of mechanism and chemism and would therefore be subject to accidentality and to the loss of its determining vocation.

But in genuine cases of teleology, the end or purpose is not slavish in that sense, or does not get lost—it preserves itself. But this is possible only insofar as the end or purpose *takes advantage* of something else that enters into those mechanical and chemical relations, something that is not accidentally present here but present to serve life's end:

that the purpose posits itself in a *mediate* connection with the object, and *between* itself and this object *inserts* another object, may be regarded as the *cunning* of reason. . . . [I]n this way, by sending an object as a means ahead of it, it lets it do the slavish work of externality in its stead, abandons it to the wear and tear while preserving itself behind it against mechanical violence. (WL 6:452/663)

The same point applies to the idea in general: the idea is a reciprocal *process* of concept and individuals. This process must be realized in something, on which it will then in a sense depend. And so in the introductory material to the “The Idea” section Hegel says that the idea depends on realization in *externality*, but that this is of no consequence because its dependence on something *indifferent* to it, and something present here on account of the idea: here “the concept,” Hegel says, is “the negativity whereby its indifferent externality of being manifests itself as unessential and as a positedness.” He then refers to dependence on inorganic realizers: “the idea is the *process* of disrupting itself into individuality and into the latter's inorganic nature” (WL 6:467–68/674).

Note the tension between this result and a rationalist demand that everything be completely explicable. Hegel denies this. For example, he holds that the lawful is not completely explicable. And there is a sense in which it could not be the case that everything is completely explicable. For if something is to be completely explicable, then something else must not be. More generally, it turns out that it is a mistake—a mistake again traceable to foundationalism—to understand the completeness of reason by trying to think of some kind of reason for completely everything. We should instead, Hegel is arguing, pursue an opposed path, thinking in terms of concepts with explanatory import all their own—even if such a complete reason or explainer could not be a reason for completely everything. Of course, some want to read Hegel as a kind of

rationalist metaphysician, in the sense I here reject; I return to this disagreement in §10.5.

8.4 Substance: Preliminary Account of the Metaphysics of the Idea

Hegel's account of the idea is part of a systematic rethinking of theoretical philosophy, extending all the way to the very notion of substance. What is both most remarkable and insufficiently appreciated about this is how everything—all the way to the new, constructive metaphysics—all rests on considerations internal to Kant's *critique* of metaphysics.

One way of putting the basic question about substance is: what *is*, most fundamentally? But the "fundamentally" here can be understood in different ways. It is tempting to think in terms of foundationalism, and so to understand this in terms of *dependence*, so that the question becomes: what *is* in such a manner that it does not depend on anything else for existence? (Compare one of Descartes' definitions of substance, as "a thing which exists in such a way that it needs no other thing in order to exist."¹²) But Hegel's metaphysics is clearly opposed: The antinomies discovered by Kant force us to distinguish the perspective of the understanding from reason and to reconstruct metaphysics without concern for substrata or the sense of dependence in which something might depend on an indifferent substratum. To argue for a metaphysics more clearly of reason, then, is to argue that the right question about substance is rather: What is it about substances that is the *reason* why they are substances, or substantial? Or: What about them *explains* this?

Note that Hegel's view here contrasts not only with purely inflationary foundationalism but also with the pure deflationism that would dismiss metaphysics. It is true that Hegel rejects the metaphysics of substance-as-subject, substratum, or the non-dependent. So Hegel rejects as uninteresting, for example, traditional metaphysical questions that assume that the mind is a substance (in the dependence sense), and then ask whether it is a mental or a physical substance (in that sense).¹³ But this is not because Hegel rejects metaphysical questions. We should not let an agreement in isolated claims mislead us into seeing a similarity of philosophical program with deflationism. Some anti-metaphysical forms of thought, popular during the more recent linguistic

¹² Descartes (1984, 1:210).

¹³ EG §389. deVries (1988, 21); Wolff (1992, 15). Similarly, Hegel rejects approaching this topic by means of "reification" (Theunissen 1980, 48); but, on my view, this is not to reject the metaphysics of substance.

turn in philosophy, may agree with Hegel in rejecting or dissolving some traditional forms of metaphysical questions. It does not follow that Hegel's program follows a similar path, up to a point, and only then diverges back into metaphysics. Hegel's arguments, from the beginning, do not point out of metaphysics but rather always deeper into it. He is arguing on the basis of an agreement with Kant about the inescapability of questions about reasons and their completeness, and their arguments against indifferentism. So we cannot follow his deflationary argument on this basis, and then ask for some additional reason to take an interest in constructive metaphysics; everything turns from the beginning on a promised systematic development of better metaphysical notions, or a better way of carrying the metaphysics of reason all the way through.

True, Hegel also sometimes uses the term "substance" to name theories that he rejects. Perhaps most prominent are the theories discussed at the end of the Doctrine of Essence in the *Logic*. But the point here is to argue against those who would *base* their metaphysics on a notion of substance; Hegel takes the most complete form of this to be Spinoza's metaphysics. In rejecting these views, Hegel is not rejecting everything about them, and he is not entirely rejecting substance. Rather, he is arguing that the notion of substance also requires a further account, and—like everything else—a further account on the basis of the contradictions uncovered by Kant's Dialectic. Thus Hegel—leaving behind such theories and beginning to introduce the last part of the *Logic*, the Doctrine of the Concept—says that "the philosophy that assumes its position at the standpoint of substance and stops there is the system of Spinoza" (WL 6:249/511).¹⁴ The point is that philosophy cannot rightly stop there; substance cannot be an *answer* to the central questions of philosophy, because it itself must be subjected to dialectical critique and ultimately understood in turn in terms of the concept and the idea.

The resulting positive, Hegelian metaphysics of substance requires care in distinguishing three points: First, the individual—for example, the individual living being—is substance, in the sense that it is this that exists as a substance, and can endure change. Second, the concept is substance in the sense that it gives the content to the substance of things, or the *what-it-is* for substances: for example, the concept in the sense of a biological species is the substance of a living being. Third, now incorporating a complete sketch of Hegel's view, substance is the idea or the process connecting concept and individual—in the sense that this is what it is about substance that *explains* its existing as substantial, enduring through change, and specifically how the concept provides the substance in the above sense. In the case of life, this explains how the concept

¹⁴ Similarly: "substance is an essential stage in the process of the development of the idea. Nevertheless, it is not this idea itself" (EL §151R).

can be “the substance of life” (WL 6:472/678). More generally, abstracted from the details concerning life, the idea is just such a reciprocal process of concept and individual, the process by which something objective “possesses its substantiality” in its concept (WL 6:466/673).

I noted in §6.3 the application of this account near the beginning of the *Logic*: there is “in each individual animal a specific *principle* that makes it animal,” and this is the “truly *permanent* and *substantial* . . . the *concept* of the thing, *the universal which is present in it*.”¹⁵ Hegel contrasts the view on which there is a bare particular with predicates ‘in’ it, on which the substance is independent of and indifferent to any of the predicates.

Note the role in this theory for the traditional notion that a substance is that which can undergo change (Aristotle, *Categories*, 4a10). Part of what Hegel is arguing is that, where we find something capable of change, this is not on account of any kind of substrate for predicates, but on account of it having a concept or *Begriff* as its substance, on account (in turn) of the idea.

We can understand this proposal, again, in terms of the initial paradigm case of life. An organism, in assimilating, undergoes a change of underlying stuff. In virtue of what does the organism persist through this change of constitution? Hegel’s answer is that the immanent end unifies the process of assimilation: the material necessary for each step in the process is present, so that each step takes place, for the sake of that end. An organism, again, “preserves itself in the relation to an other”; for it is “the real end or *Zweck* itself” (PhG §256). “[P]urpose,” alternatively, “in its efficacy, it does not pass over [into something else] but instead *preserves itself*” (EL §204R). And we know that Hegel will account for this inner purposiveness, or the basis of persistence through change, in terms of the concept and the idea.

Is the point that everything real is either a substance or dependent on one? No. If there are to be any forms of the idea, then some things must not be forms of the idea. So if Hegel accounts for substance in terms of the idea, then part of the point is that some things must be less than fully substantial. And Hegel’s view is that these don’t depend on any further, hidden substance. In particular, something lawful lacks the requisite intimate relation between concept and realization, so the former cannot provide the substance of the latter. Lawful things “do not possess the reality of their concept completely within them” (WL 6:465/672). The lawful thing is not substantial, but merely “gets lost” in its relations with others (PhG §246). And indeed it is hard to see how we could account for change as opposed to alteration in the case of something in space and time that has no immanent purpose. If it is in space, then it is in principle divisible, and we can at least conceive of it gaining or losing parts. But no such

¹⁵ WL 5:26–27/16.

swap, by hypothesis, is explained by an immanent purpose, which might unify the whole over time. So there is nothing to the object itself, or of the object's own, to provide a determinate distinction between change of a substance over time and the end of a substance. Of course, we might have the social practice of treating such things as persisting. But that is just to say that we might have a practice of treating what is metaphysically insubstantial as substantial, or metaphysically indeterminate as determinate. The contrast is with a living being, which is substantial, not in virtue of our practices, but because it has an *immanent* end of its own.¹⁶ A radical feature of Hegel's account of substance is clear by comparison with a substratum theory. Hegel not only argues against thinking of substance as the non-dependent; Hegel's substance, as for example in our first paradigm case of life, depends on the non-substantial, in being built out of it. But this is again dependence on the indifferent: the underlying insubstantial stuff is present on account of the immanent purpose, rather than determining the purpose, to which it is indifferent.

Hegel's frequent references to Aristotle naturally raise the question of how to compare their theories of substance. But there is no space here to interpret Aristotle's account of substance, resolving the many puzzles concerning it. Sometimes Aristotle is associated with substratum theories, and in that sense Hegel is no Aristotelian. But there are also passages in Aristotle that seem to make it natural that Hegel would have found inspiration here. For example, Aristotle sometimes seems to argue that the question of substance is the question of the cause—I would take this to mean the broad sense of the explanatory reason, even if it is not narrowly an efficient cause—of the unity of a substance; and that the answer is something akin to Hegel's universality or concepts, namely, *form*:

clearly the question is *why* the matter is some definite thing; e.g. . . . why is this individual thing, or this body having this form, a man? Therefore what we seek is the cause, i.e., the form, by reason of which the matter is some definite thing; and this is the substance of the thing. (*Metaphysics Z*, 1041b3–9)¹⁷

But there is also a crucial difference worth noting: Hegel's arguments do not just return directly to Aristotle, or engage with Aristotle as if Kant had never interrupted metaphysics with a powerful critique. Hegel holds that metaphysics requires systematic reconstruction, as an organized whole, on Kantian

¹⁶ See a similar point in Wolff about inorganic things lacking individuality (1992, 131).

¹⁷ See Shields (2007, 261ff.) on this strand in Aristotle, and (85ff.) on a connected strand in Aristotle on teleology. See Ferrarin (2001, 152) on a similar connection with Hegel.

grounds presumably not available to Aristotle. For it is Kant's Dialectic account of reason and its necessary engagement with contradictions, Hegel argues, that shows us why we should reject entirely the perspective of the understanding and the notion of substrata, and accordingly refine the notion of reason, rebuilding philosophy around it.

Note the bearing of Hegel's account of substance, looking back now to what I called above "metaphysically robust compatibilism" concerning teleology and mechanism (§3.7). We might have asked whether Hegel's proposal is more like Descartes' substance dualism, or rather a recent form of non-reductive materialism. But it should be clear now how Hegel's metaphysics of reason moves in a direction opposed to both comparisons. On Hegel's view, there can no longer be any question of argument, with Descartes, that mind is possible without matter, and so does not *depend* on matter, and so for that reason must be a separate substance. On Hegel's view, *dependence in this sense no longer matters to substance*. But by the same token, there is no longer any question of taking refuge in a more modest-seeming view that teleology is just a non-reducible way of explaining the behavior of particularly complex cases of material substance. For the dependence of teleological life on material realizers does not establish the latter as the substance. Hegel's view is different: the substantial must necessarily be realized in the insubstantial.

It is also important to attend to the connections between Hegel's account of substance and his multiple holisms. Consider again our paradigm cases of the lawful and life. Hegel advocates different forms of metaphysical holism in both cases. In the case of the lawful the point of the holism is that nothing lawful can be comprehended in terms of its kind or concept itself, but only in terms of relations to others. This is a form of *insubstantial* holism: there is no form of the idea here, and consequently nothing has a concept completely within it to provide substance. There is only at best a distant approximation of substance. Contrast life. There is here too a form of metaphysical holism. An individual organism is what it is only given its connections with others of its kind, and their connection with an external environment. And yet here there is substance: the relation between kind or concept and its instances is such as to provide substance to the individuals. So Hegel's *metaphysics* has inter-related accounts of insubstantial holism with respect to what is not the idea, and the substantial holism with respect to forms of the idea. This is so even if his method will ultimately link these together into one *epistemological* whole.

Note that neither form of holism is any assertion of anything like a substance monism, in any sense that would hold that there is a priority of one whole that everything real must be *in*. In the case of the lawful, the point is that there is no substance at all, not that there is one substance. And, in the case of life, the point is that there are multiple substances: each individual has its immanent

end making it a substance persisting through time. True, the substance of each individual of a species is provided by a common concept or nature of the kind; but Hegel's argument itself concerning life requires that this cannot be monism: Hegel shows that we can comprehend and know inner purposiveness only in knowing living beings as struggling *with an external environment*, and knowing *distinct* individuals as related within the process of reproduction.¹⁸

8.5 Substance and the Idea as One Guiding Thread through the *Logic*

Hegel's theory of substance is in fact one guiding thread throughout the argument of the *Logic*, and a thread that links much of the earlier material to the conclusion discussed here. Hegel is throughout arguing that philosophical questions about *what is*—as for example questions about what substance is—will be improperly posed until they are posed as questions about reason or explanation; and he is arguing throughout that such questions must ultimately be answered by appeal to the idea.

One example is the question of substance in the specific sense of the question of what endures through change. This approach reveals one aspect of the Doctrine of Being: a case against the proposal that objects are just collections of their determinations, or that the being of objects is given immediately by their determinations. One problem with this view is that objects would be what they are by virtue of the totality of their determinations and (Hegel argues) contrasting determinations of everything else. Any change of anything, then, would be the destruction of what it is, and perhaps even everything else by contrast. So within the limits of "Being," we cannot make sense of persisting substance, only "passing over" or "*übergehen in Anderes*." Within the realm of Being, then, there are no determinate persisting substances for thought to get any grip on; everything passes over or away.¹⁹

Hegel concludes from this line of argument that in order for there to be determinate, persisting substances, there must be something more like a persisting *essence* of things, and the simplest, first way of accounting for this—the topic of the Doctrine of Essence—is in terms of a kind of substrate of change, which is supposed to *shine forth* or be *reflected* in the surface of objects. But here we find difficulties related to the cases of (i) "real ground" and (ii) "formal

¹⁸ Even McTaggart (1910, 275–76), who generally reads Hegel as a monist, notes in his commentary that the argument of the "Life" section has an incompatible conclusion.

¹⁹ The quoted words figure in a citation to follow. For similar readings of this transition, see Pinkard (1988, 55–56); Pippin (1989, 192–93); and Stern (1990, 58).

ground,” considered in §1.3. If (i) the essence is like an external object, behind the surface, then all of the same problems that affect immediate being will replay themselves with essence, and we will seem to require an essence for the essence, or the roles will reverse and the essence will turn out to be the superficial surface, just as real external force would be dependent on conditions on the surface of things that determine when force is manifested. If (ii) we instead say that essence is not distinct from the surface, but only a form of redescription of the surface of things, then it cannot do the work required of it in making sense of persistence through change; that things can be redescribed in different ways cannot explain why or whether they can persist through change, any more than describing changes in general or universal terms would explain them.²⁰ So all we can conclude here is that a successful account of substance would somehow require essence to be neither distinct (in the sense of the externality of real ground) nor non-distinct (in the sense of formal ground). And that, on my reading, is not a statement of Hegel’s view, but a statement of a problem supposed to be resolvable only with more resources, later in the book.

What Hegel seeks to argue in the Doctrine of the Concept, concluding the *Logic*, is that the concept and ultimately the idea explain the persistence of substance through development, or the unity of a substance with itself through a change between contrary qualities. So with the concept we are supposed to get beyond the problems of the “passing over” of the Doctrine of Being and the “shining” of the Doctrine Essence. And there is a remarkable summary of the overall movement of the book in these terms; once we get the conclusions of the last part of the *Logic*,

[t]he way the concept proceeds is no longer passing over or shining in an other. It is instead *development* since what are differentiated are at the same time immediately posited as identical with one another and with the whole. (EL §161)

Lecture notes provide the paradigmatic biological example:²¹

Passing over into an other is the dialectical process in the sphere of *being* and the process of shining in an other within the sphere of *essence*. The movement of the *concept* is, by contrast, the *development*. . . . Thus, for example, the plant develops itself out of its seed. (EL §161Z; cf. VL 143)

²⁰ Following Longuenesse: “‘ground’ structures the whole Doctrine of Essence” (2007, 92).

²¹ The account of development via this biological example also plays an important role in Marcuse (1987, e.g. 54, 69, 77, 150).

So there is something that explains the persistence from seed through plant, something to the persisting substance. But this is nothing that is entirely local to a spatio-temporal region: neither a bit of matter nor a shape in which matter is already organized. For the shape changes. Nor is it an external real ground, like yet another plant behind this one. Rather, there is something constant that explains this change, which is the very substance of the persisting plant itself; this is present “in an ideal manner” (*in ideeller Weise*) (EL §161Z): the concept is the substance, and in virtue of this being a case of *the idea* or *die Idee*.

This is a conclusion, however, that is supposed to emerge through the argument of the concluding Doctrine of the Concept. It will not be sufficient, to this end, to treat concepts in isolation: Concepts must be understood in the context of judgments (“The Judgment”). And then judgments in the context of syllogisms, or patterns of explanatory thought (“The Syllogism”).²² But to do the required work these patterns of explanatory thought would have to be immanent in the object, so Hegel turns from the chapters above, under the section heading of “The Subjective Concept” (using EL titles now), to “The Object,” considering first the sorts of objects delineated by explanatory patterns we might have expected to provide a kind of metaphysical foundation: in terms of homogeneous mechanism (“Mechanism”). And then he considers objects as organized by lawful relations (“Chemism”), and in terms of external purposiveness (“Teleology”). All of that is supposed to bring us to the point of seeing that we need genuinely inner purposiveness if the concept is to do the work of explaining the possibility of change. And that is the argument for the transition to “The Idea” section and its first form or chapter, “Life.”

All this still leaves many issues unresolved going forward, about the rest of the material in the *Logic*, and especially about “the absolute idea” and the way in which Hegel’s non-monist metaphysics will lead him to defend a strong form of methodological, epistemological monism. But the important point so far is Hegel’s case for his constructive metaphysics of the idea, and for the comprehensibility and knowability of the idea: Once we excise substrata, we are left with an approach to more complete explanation in terms of a concept or kind possessing explanatory import of its own. And this can be known and comprehended. It is simply the process establishing the intimate relationship between concept and individual instances, which makes for inner purposiveness—as, for example, in the case of life. We can know the idea or the rational, in this sense, even if doing so requires going beyond Kant’s bounds of

²² See also Pinkard (1988, 86) for an account of this transition in terms of Hegel’s attention to Kant’s Transcendental Dialectic account of reason. See Redding (2007, 122) for a case that seeds of this point are present in Kant’s first *Critique*, in the form of a claim for the important role of the Dialectic.

sensibility, without any need of knowing an underlying metaphysical foundation or substrate of all matter or nature, and so without need of ascending to a higher form of intellect capable of grasping reality immediately and all at once. And so Hegel can make a start at borrowing the contradictions by means of which Kant's Dialectic criticizes metaphysics, and using these instead to support a reformulation or refinement of the metaphysics of substance, now in terms of reason and the idea.

Free Kind for Itself

From the Metaphysics of the Absolute Idea to Epistemological Monism and Idealism

We have seen how Hegel's account of "the idea" makes sense of the reality and knowability of explanatory completeness greater than any step in the sort of regress discussed in Kant's Antinomies; the result is a systematically reconstructed metaphysics of reason, replacing Kant's restriction of knowledge. But there are two especially important openings for rejoinder. One will concern epistemology (§9.3). But the first concerns the completion of Hegel's metaphysics: All this so far (the Kantian could object) concerns only explanatory completeness that is *relatively* greater. But the Transcendental Dialectic is ultimately concerned with *absolute* endpoints of theoretical inquiry. So to dispute the Dialectic, and the appeal of Kant's restriction of knowledge, Hegel's case would have to include an account of the reality and knowability of an *absolutely* complete form of reason.

It would be interesting to consider how much of Hegel's response would stand without accepting the challenge, or by arguing against the need to do so. After all, it might be argued that a knowable and comprehensible form of explanatory completeness greater than any considered or allowed in the Antinomies is enough to solve the problem there. But there can be no doubt that Hegel rather accepts the challenge and seeks to meet it with an account of what he calls "the absolute idea."

This may look easy for Hegel: clearly, given his claims so far, the *absolute idea* would simply have to be a universal with explanatory import absolutely its own. But this is again a problem, and not yet a solution. To see why, consider the idea as life. Clearly there are limits to its explanatory completeness. The *Logic* accounts for life in terms of the immanent end of self-preservation. But there are many different ways in which different species could seek this end. The idea of life in the *Logic* does nothing to explain why multiple forms or

species should be actually realized in the world, nor which ones should be; it leaves all this unexplained. One could *imagine* that there might be something more complete in this respect—something with some kind of power to absolutely close those explanatory gaps. But imagination does nothing to explain how such a thing would really be possible, let alone to open a path to establishing knowledge that there is any such thing. Indeed it seems worth worrying whether such an absolute would have to be somehow otherworldly, and too remote to be comprehensible or knowable. And that is the central challenge going forward.

The best way to approach Hegel's answer in the *Logic* (§9.1) will require first taking a short, preparatory detour. In the case of "Life" in the *Logic*, knowing about the elm tree and its leaves helped us to understand, even if the argument of the *Logic* does not depend on anything about the elm. There are some further details that can similarly help us to approach the *Logic's* account of the absolute idea, even if the argument itself does not depend on them. These details concern Hegel's account of our own species, kind, or concept—which Hegel calls *spirit* (or mind; "*Geist*"). Hegel has his own unusual take on this topic, defended in the third and last part of the *Encyclopedia*, the *Philosophy of Spirit* (EG). The key claim, here, is that the concept of spirit is freedom, in a sense comparable to that in which the concept of matter is supposed to be gravitation. But the freedom here is nothing otherworldly, nor any kind of brute and so inexplicable contra-causal power of a soul substance-as-substrate. The freedom of interest here is not utterly beyond the account of the natural world above; it is rather a completion of that account, taking it a last step further, as it were, in the direction already traveled from the lawful to life. As claims about human beings, this is all very controversial; but all that we need for the purposes of returning to the *Logic* is a sense of a non-otherworldly approach to freedom—no claims specifically addressing human beings will be presupposed in the *Logic's* own very different arguments for the comprehensibility of the absolute idea (this chapter), and for its reality (next chapter).

The *Logic's* absolute idea (§9.2), then, will be a form of the idea, which (we have seen) is a process relating universal, particular, and individual. And so it will be in this respect parallel with the account of the idea as life. More specifically, the proposal is to take the idea as life, add a form of thinking or reflection, and thereby substitute a kind of *freedom* for life's immanent end of *self-preservation*. So:

The absolute idea = any reciprocal process of concept or kind and individual where thinking or reflection establishes freedom as immanent purpose.

For the *Logic*, it does not matter whether specifically human beings are such a case, leaving irrelevant the specific claims from the *Philosophy of Spirit*. What is important is rather the case of *whatever* might think through the argument of the *Logic* itself. Any such case would now, Hegel argues, explain diversity out of itself, unlike the idea in the form of life; and the absolute idea in this sense would be metaphysically prior or fundamental, in the sense of being a complete form of reason.

Further (§9.3), Hegel will add to this sense of metaphysical priority a claim for the epistemological priority of the absolute idea, which is also a kind of epistemological monism. The absolute idea exemplifies the kind of explanation we are seeking when we seek to explain anything. True, some phenomena—paradigmatically the lawful—are not such that they can be explained in a way that reaches the endpoint. But explanation of any *X* only provides a kind of insight or understanding insofar as it uncovers a sense in which *X* can be understood as an approximation, even if distant, of the absolute idea. It turns out, then, that all intelligibility of anything would implicitly involve comparison to the absolute idea, within one whole system in which everything relates back to the absolute idea. Once we have this account of the meaning of Hegel's claims about the absolute idea, we can turn in the next chapter to the *Logic's* own distinctive argument strategy aiming to establish knowledge of its existence.

9.1 Detour: The Distinction between Spirit and Nature

I turn for orientation, then, to the *Philosophy of Spirit*, looking just to place some of the most familiar features of Hegel's account in the context of my interpretation of Hegel's metaphysics of reason.

Hegel's treatment of the freedom of spirit is often compared to Frankfurt's theory of freedom of the will and the concept of a person.¹ Frankfurt too seeks an account of a non-biological concept, which he calls the concept of a person.² And Frankfurt accounts for personhood in terms of a kind of free will, understood not as involving an extra entity, like a soul substance-as-substratum, but a distinctive *structure* within desire or will (1971, 6), and specifically a *reflective* structure (1971, 7). But to understand Hegel, we will also have to think here

¹ In comparing Frankfurt, I follow Kreines (2001); at the time I was not yet aware of the comparison in Quante (1997), from which I have now benefited greatly.

² Hegel's own technical use of the term "person" differs.

in terms of his own metaphysics of the concept-thesis. So the term “*Geist*” or “spirit” will not refer just to an individual, or to any set or collection built out of individuals; it refers to a universal kind or concept (*Begriff*). On Hegel’s view, to be a member of a natural, biological kind is to have a structure and consequent behavior explicable in terms of an immanent end of self-preservation. And this end explains the structure of our bodies and behavior such as the pumping of our hearts. But Hegel argues that our actions are not explicable just in terms of mere self-preservation, so that our kind is not biological or a kind of natural life, in this respect. And a sort of freedom is supposed to make the difference here.

In the *Philosophy of Spirit*, and corresponding parts of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel approaches the freedom of spirit, first, by focusing on the individual, and individual capacities, or on “Subjective Spirit.” Here the supposed contrast between spirit and nature looks like this: “[t]he animal acts by instinct, it is impelled” (PR §4R); we, on the other hand, have a thinking or a “‘reflecting’ will” (EG §476). We can step back, as it were, from

every content, whether present immediately through nature, through needs, desires, and drives, or given and determined in some other way. (PR §5)

But if one were to try to construct an account of free will on the basis of this first “moment” of the will alone, then one would have to conclude that acting freely requires setting aside everything at all like a desire or preference, or finding every determinate end or goal a restriction or limitation to be overcome, and acting from a perspective that somehow transcends all of that. Hegel dismissively calls this notion “the freedom of the void” (PR §5). Hegel is arguing that, if there is to be any real achievement of free will, then the universal power of reflection (a first moment of the will) and particular ends or goals (a second moment) must not remain unreconciled. The individual free will requires a “unity” of this universal and particular: a resolution on something particular, but not in a manner that is a concession to desire for it. The determination by some particular end must rather be in a manner that embodies or expresses the power of reflection, and in a way that one can recognize as one’s own. Freedom of the will is “the *self-determination* of the ‘I’, in that it posits itself as . . . *determinate* and *limited*, and at the same time remains with itself” (PR §7). Lecture notes offer the well-known example of friendship and love: To form a friendship is to limit oneself, insofar as one might have to help in times of need, for example. But my will can be *with itself* even in that limitation: “[h]ere we . . . willingly limit ourselves with

reference to an other, even while knowing ourselves in this limitation as ourselves" (PR §7Z).³

On this account, freedom of the will would have to be an achievement; Hegel rejects accounts on which there is a separate special substratum, with a special brute power of freedom, or accounts on which the will is "already assumed to be a *subject* or *substratum*" (PR §7R). But, characteristically, this is not to reject the metaphysics of substance, but to revise it; "freedom of the will" now "constitutes the concept or substantiality of the will" (PR §7).

This account of free will suggests that we all face a practical problem, namely, what should we resolve upon such that we can be "with ourselves" in the resulting limits?

But there is also a theoretical problem for Hegel's philosophy here, concerning the supposed sharp line between spirit and natural life. We began by saying that spiritual individuals would turn out to be distinct *in kind* in that they are not merely "impelled" by anything like a desire. But given the rejection of the freedom of the void, it turns out that our freedom looks so far more *continuous*, insofar as free will requires particular ends. Consider just the idea of being "with oneself": if the key here is that one can be committed, as to a friend, in a manner that is without alienation or internal conflict, then this would hardly mark a discontinuity, since a natural animal impelled by desire might just as well be entirely free of such internal alienation or conflict.⁴

Part of Hegel's point here is that really understanding the basic sharp line between spirit and natural life requires turning from "Subjective Spirit," and toward a focus on forms of relations between individuals, or "Objective Spirit." This will include habits or customs, such as language (e.g., EG §410, §459), ethical custom (PR §151), and the institutions discussed in the *Philosophy of Right* and comparable parts of "Objective Spirit." This shift in focus is comparable to the argument that answering Kant on teleology and biology requires a shift in focus toward relations of reproduction within a species. This will bring a sharp distinction into view insofar as the freedom of the will above—initially as a problem—is supposed to shape the development of spirit in ways that will better allow and embody solutions to that same problem.

³ See also Wood (1990, 45–49); Quante (1997, 64–65); Wallace (1999, 422–23); and see the accounts in each of the connection between freedom of the will and "Objective Spirit."

⁴ Compare Frankfurt: he tries to contrast free will with an arbitrariness of first-order desire; but it is often objected that second-order would be potentially arbitrary in the same respect. He responds by appeal to the possibility of resolution where "there is no disturbing conflict" (1987, 37), but the lack of conflict cannot itself make out a sharp contrast, since there can be unconflicted but arbitrary determination by first-order desire. Kreines (2001) finds a solution in Hegel's theory of spirit; see also Quante (1997).

Perhaps the most basic case is Hegel's famous struggle for recognition, and the dialectic of lordship and bondage.⁵ Compare Hobbes's pessimistic claim that life in the state of nature would be a war of all against all, with the only possible resolution being the concentration of power with a sovereign.⁶ Hegel agrees that conflict is initially inevitable, but he denies that conflict or the resulting domination is natural. Consider a conflict over something—an apple, for example—where A manages to get the apple in hand and B does not. To whatever degree self-preservation is B's overriding concern, this is not a clear cause for confrontation, since it also provides reason to fear conflict and pick another apple, or seek elsewhere a survival level of nourishment. But with a reflective will, to deny it is to challenge its resolution, and so its freedom. Thus precisely to whatever degree the natural end of self-preservation is *not* overriding this is *more* likely to result in conflict and, initially, attempts to force others to recognize and fall into line with one's own authority.⁷ So the initial conflict or "contradiction" between wills

gives either self-consciousness the impulse to *show* itself as a free self, and to exist as such for the other:—the process of *recognition*.
(EG §430)

In this way Hegel seeks to explain the inevitability of "battle" (EG §431) and (with a victor) "inequality" or "the status of *master and slave*." This is Hegel's account, comparable to Hobbes's, of "the emergence of man's social life and the commencement of political union" (EG §433).

But Hegel characteristically seeks to find an optimistic implication in this otherwise pessimistic view: the *same* process that makes conflict and initial domination inevitable also explains why these should be overcome.⁸ With respect to the slave, the same process explains his learning to become more explicitly aware of, and to resist, any given desire; for he must suppress his own desires in order to serve someone else. And this explains as well how the master can come to see that her own goal is actually a kind of freedom that requires a self-mastery achieved only in someone else, namely, the slave (EG §435). All this is supposed to explain the development of new ways of thinking, and new ways of relating to one another, or new forms of objective spirit, built around

⁵ In the *Philosophy of Spirit* this material is introduced back in the "Subjective Spirit" section, but influences the development of much that comes after.

⁶ On the development of Hegel's position on recognition, and the relation to Hobbes, see especially Siep (1974).

⁷ I follow in many ways Pinkard (2012, 58ff.). On the analogous material in the *Phenomenology*, see also Pippin (1993, 68).

⁸ Compare again Siep (1974, e.g., 186) on the development of this response in Hegel to Hobbes.

the idea of an equal universal dignity or moral worth in that all can reflect on desires and potentially master themselves:

the slave . . . overcomes the inner immediacy of appetite, and in this divestment of self and in ‘the fear of his lord’ makes ‘the beginning of wisdom’—the passage to universal self-consciousness. (EG §435)

This is supposed to be a step—although only a first step, with many problems and developments left to come—toward the realization of freedom. The *Philosophy of Right*—and the corresponding parts of “Objective Spirit” in the *Encyclopedia*—are supposed to be about the system of institutions that realize this freedom: “the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom, the world of spirit produced from within itself as a second nature” (PR §4).

None of that optimism, however, is supposed to guarantee or even make possible a good outcome for the combatants above. Still, there is a surprising sense in which their action is supposed to contribute to furthering *the very end that they pursue*. They seek, even if not in a self-aware manner, freedom of the will, in the sense of a way of resolving such that their will can be with itself in limitation. They will not succeed. But the way that they engage with their situation in action exerts pressure against forms of relation that frustrate such an end, and pressure toward the development of forms that better allow and embody that end. So the general idea is that, over time, actions aimed at freedom *shape or mold* objective forms of spirit that better embody freedom. In Hegel’s terms:

the purposive action of the will is to realize its concept, freedom, in these externally objective aspects, making the latter a world molded by the former, which in it is thus at home with itself. (EG §484)

Hegel will add as well an account of what he calls “Absolute Spirit.” The connection between this material to the above is, in short, as follows: Unlike the case of life, what is important with spirit does not go on so much behind the back, as it were, of the individual. On the contrary, the development of spirit turns on thinking or reflective capacities, and the resulting development explains the growth of improved understanding of our kind or concept, and its immanent purpose of freedom. In Hegel’s terms: with spirit, the kind or concept is not just “in itself” (*in sich*) or implicit, but also “for itself” (*für sich*). For *absolute* spirit, what is required is self-determination involving this consciousness of its own concept. Thus, the final “Absolute Spirit” section of the *Philosophy of Spirit* begins:

The *concept* of spirit has its *reality* in spirit. If this reality in identity with that concept is to exist as the consciousness of the absolute idea,

then the necessary aspect is that the *implicitly* (*in sich*) free intelligence be in its actuality liberated to its concept. (EG §553)

Hegel continues on to argue that the process of coming to know ourselves as spirit realizes itself progressively in art, religion, and most completely in philosophy. It is to the philosophy of the *Logic* itself as a form of this supposed “consciousness of the absolute idea” that I will return below.

But we have now seen enough to set aside further questions about this material—about how it bears on more familiar issues about human beings, freedom of the will, political philosophy—and conclude with the basic contrast between spirit and natural life. Nature is supposed to be incompletely explicable. First, lawful nature contains a kind of necessity—lawfulness—but nothing to explain why there are multiple interconnected lawful kinds, and the determinate character of the whole system of kinds. Furthermore, even life contains nothing to explain why there should be multiple species, and which there should be. The case of spirit is supposed to overcome this limit, and not just as a matter of degree but of kind: the concept of spirit itself *explains* the emergence of conflict between different forms or shapes of spirit, and explains the general process of development of determinate resolutions, all in terms of one immanent end of spirit, namely, freedom. Thus:

In nature . . . the play of forms is prey to boundless and unchecked contingency. . . . The highest level to which nature attains is life . . . whereas in every expression of *Geist* there is contained the moment of free, universal self-relation. (EN §248R)

Hegel often emphasizes this contingency of the natural, as a kind of limit to explicability; and he often contrasts spirit. Sometimes he stresses the inexplicability of the presence of different biological species and change or stasis in these.⁹ Sometimes Hegel expresses the broader point by referring to a “powerlessness” or “weakness” or “impotence [*Ohnmacht*] of nature” generally:

In the sphere of nature contingency and determination from without has its right. . . . This is the powerlessness of nature. (EN §250)

But it is crucial that spirit’s contrasting self-determination is teleological. The point is not that everything happening to all of us is supposed to be strictly determined by exceptionless laws, or *necessitated*. We saw above Hegel’s

⁹ E.g., WL 6:421/639; EL §234Z; EN §368Z in the German; in the English edition this is §370Z.

argument that the lawful has *less* rather than *more* explanatory import of its own. The account of spirit extends this: with respect to spirit alone, historical development itself is teleological. So, although lordship and bondage relations, for example, should give way, there is no lawful rule about precisely when; and if there were, then the explanation would not be more complete, but less.

Of course, insofar as this is supposed to be an account of what *we* are, it is an account of something that is in some ways dependent: we are dependent on the natural world. But Hegel's position here should now be unsurprising: the required realizers are just a substrate, indifferent to spirit and the end of freedom (e.g., EG §392).¹⁰ So this does not undercut the sense in which spirit is supposed to be self-determining.

This, in sum, as a *metaphysics* of a self-determining substance. Not, to be sure, in a sense that would take an all-encompassing substrate and endow it with basic, special powers.¹¹ But it is a metaphysics in precisely the sense most important to Hegel's project: it is a metaphysics of reason; spirit is neither an individual or individuals, but a concept or *Begriff*, and one that is a distinctly self-determining form of reason or explainer.¹²

9.2 The Concept and the Absolute Idea: Metaphysical Priority in the *Logic*

We can now leave the *Philosophy of Spirit* behind. My goal in this next section is to understand the *Logic* account of what the absolute idea is or would be, and the argument that this would be a complete explainer.

In short, the *Logic* argues that the limitation of the idea as life can be overcome, making for a concept with explanatory import absolutely its own. To

¹⁰ While there are many good reasons to reject Hegel's claims about gender (e.g., PR §166), this is one point at which there is also reason even internal to Hegel's own commitments to reject those claims.

¹¹ Some work on Hegel's earlier theory of spirit takes it to be distinct in that the mature theory is supposed to be an account of an all-encompassing substance, in something like this sense, e.g., Habermas (1987, 39–40). There is neither space nor need here to adjudicate further the texts on spirit; here it will have to be enough to say that reading in light of the evidence of the *Logic* certainly suggests a sharply opposed direction in Hegel's thinking.

¹² I take myself to have followed Pippin and Pinkard on spirit here, but I would not express matters as concerning a “non-metaphysical character of the *Natur-Geist* distinction” (Pippin 2002, 60), nor say that this is “not a metaphysical difference ... or the exercise of a special form of causality” (Pinkard 2012, 18). For the self-determination of spirit *is* the special form of causality (in the broad sense of a form of explanatory reason), which *is* the metaphysics—in precisely the sense of the term “metaphysics” that is required for understanding Hegel's overall project.

see the point, take the account of spirit, above, and abstract away from the details concerning friendship and the like, and from questions about human beings in particular; focus just on the notion of a process relating universal, particular, and individual, establishing immanent purposiveness, but now with a reflectiveness or thinking which makes for the immanent end of *freedom*, rather than *self-preservation*. We then get the notion of a kind or concept that would explain from itself the emergence of diversity and explain from itself a direction of development or movement. This would be a self-determining process, with explanatory import all its own—it would be the absolute idea.

It does not matter here whether the specifically human or forms of human social life can be understood in these terms, or have to do with complete explanation. But having looked at Hegel's claims about that matter should make it easier to see that this absolute idea is not supposed to require some otherworldly sort of freedom, in the sense of something that depends on nothing, and so something fit to play a leading role in a metaphysical foundationalism. What interests Hegel is a process connecting universal, particular, and individual; for the absolute idea is still a form of the idea.

I now turn to the text of the *Logic* argument for this general account of the absolute idea. The *first* step is Hegel's case for the limitation of the idea specifically as life. With life, individuals participate in a larger process: "the *propagation* of the living species." But the concept is not *for itself* here. As a result, relative to any goals of an individual organism, what it does can have no effect on any larger process of development, which in this respect cannot go anywhere: it is "only the repetition and the infinite process in which it does not step outside the finitude of its immediacy" (WL 6:485/688; cf. EL §221). But we can learn from this limitation how the absolute idea would have to differ from life in determinate ways: it would have to be free of "immediacy" above, reflecting on itself, and as a consequence have freedom as inner purpose. Thus, the conclusion of "Life" in the *Logic* is that we must turn to an idea that "comes to itself, to its truth, entering into concrete existence as the free kind [*Gattung*] for itself" (EL §222).

The *second* step of the *Logic* argument is an attempt to make good on that initial promise, but one that is supposed to fail instructively. Hegel proceeds by looking for an account of some individual, *X*, superior to life because endowed with superior capacities. First, there is the addition of *theoretical* capacities ("Cognition" [EL] or "The Idea of Cognition" [WL]). But Hegel argues that this would mark a sharp line distinction only if the philosophical work is really done not by *X* but by a special *object* tracked by this capacity: "the true" (EL §226ff.) or "The Idea of the True" (WL 6:487/697ff.). The same applies to the practical capacity of willing and a supposedly higher object, the good

(EL §233ff.; WL 6:541/729ff.). Either way, the supposed superiority of *X* would fall outside of *X* itself, into a supposedly higher object entirely beyond it.

Hegel draws two conclusions. The first is that *part* of the alternative to appeal to supposedly higher objects as a sought-after beyond would involve capacities at once both theoretical and practical. So, first:

The absolute idea has shown itself to be the identity of the theoretical and the practical idea, each of which, of itself still one-sided, possesses the idea only as a sought-for beyond and unattained goal. (WL 6:548/735)

The second conclusion is this: The alternative to trying to just posit a superiority would be explaining the superiority, just as “Life” explains the relatively greater explanatory completeness of inner purposiveness by appeal to a reciprocal process connecting universal and particular individuals. So we must go *back to the idea as life*, but to a version of this that overcomes the immediacy of life by incorporating the distinct practical/theoretical capacity noted previously. That is supposed to allow an idea that explains development and diversity out if itself:

The absolute idea, as the rational concept that in its reality only rejoins itself, is by virtue of this immediacy of its objective identity, on the one hand, a turning back to *life*; on the other hand, it has equally sublated this form of its immediacy and harbors the most extreme opposition within. (WL 6:548/735)¹³

The “Absolute Idea” chapter, then, treats the idea as an objective process that is what it is because of the way it is subjectively for itself, or “the unity of the subjective and the objective idea” (EL §236). The idea here

is both the manner of cognition, of the concept *subjectively* aware of itself, and the *objective* manner, or rather the *substantiality of things*. (WL 6:552/737)

Lecture notes refer here to “the *idea* insofar as it is *in* and *for itself* and, thereby, *absolute*” (EL §236Z). And this account of the absolute idea continues the broader account of the idea in that we are still talking about a process, movement, or activity; but now the movement is self-explaining

¹³ An alternative with respect to these last two passages is McTaggart (1910, 306), who reads them asserting an organic monism.

or self-determining: “its movement is the universal absolute activity, the self-determining and self-realizing movement” (WL 6:551/737).

Having seen the basic account in the text of the “Absolute Idea” chapter, I now turn to some broader comments and connections. First, one might, of course, object that we can frame a conception of a yet more absolutely complete reason or explainer: we can think not of any form of the idea in the sense of a process or movement, or anything akin to life in this respect, but rather of a metaphysical foundation, which depends on nothing while grounding itself and everything else. We might think, for example, of Spinoza’s God or substance. But Hegel’s position should be clear by now: when we look toward such foundations for complete explainers, we come up only with a mixed notion of reasons and a substrate, and the results are unstable in a way that will be undercut by antinomies. The lesson to draw is that we should not understand reason in terms of dependence in the first place, and so no longer be tempted by this kind of foundationalist image. If reason is our focus, then this lies in a different direction, with the conclusion that a complete reason would not be any kind of reason for completely everything; indeed, on Hegel’s account, completeness of reason requires that some things are incomplete reasons.

These results also clarify Hegel’s terminological emphasis on *the* idea (*die Idee*), and *the* concept (*der Begriff*) rather than only *concepts*. There can be different forms of the idea—in particular, the idea realized as life is not the absolute case. But since there is an absolute case, this is *the* idea. Similarly, there are many concepts, in Hegel’s sense—as, for example, with the concept of matter; but all others turn out to be lesser forms of the absolute case of *the* concept, which turns out to be the concept of freedom. Thus, “[t]he idea itself is no more to be taken as an idea of *something or other* than the concept is to be taken merely as a determinate concept”; the idea “is essentially *concrete* since it is the free concept, the concept determining itself and thereby determining itself as reality” (EL §213R). The story is similar elsewhere where Hegel puts the emphasis on *the* concept, for example: “The concept is the *free*, as the *substantial power that is for itself*” (EL §160).¹⁴

While the *Logic* does not address the topics of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, it does employ its own version of the notion of spirit, leaving out the details specifically about human beings and social life, discussed above, and focusing on just the notion of something that not only has its concept in itself but also *for* itself, and for this reason something that is what it is because of how it understands or comprehends itself. So the *Logic* distinguishes the topic that “belongs to the

¹⁴ Compare the different approach in Horstmann (1990, 45–46). Note that the issues driving Hegel’s view here are not at base epistemological—the concept is not fundamentally distinguished by how it can be known.

doctrine of spirit proper” from “[t]he *idea of spirit* which is the subject matter of *logic*.” The latter is “the logical idea of spirit” (WL 6:496/695–96). Thus, there is a sense in which it is proper for both the EL and WL to specifically emphasize that the transition beyond the idea as life is a transition to “spirit”:

the immediacy of living individuality perishes; the death of this life is the coming to be of spirit. The idea, *in sich* as kind, becomes *for sich*. (WL 6:486/688; cf. EL §222)

Consequently, the *Logic* also addresses its own version of the contrast between spirit and nature: spirit, unlike natural life, explains conflict or diversity out of its own one concept; “spirit” is

infinitely richer than nature . . . since its essence is constituted by the absolute unity *in the concept* of opposites. . . . [I]t exhibits contradiction at its most extreme form. (WL 6:488/690)¹⁵

And the *Logic* in this way contributes to the promised (§6.3) reconception of the topic of rationalist accounts of the soul (WL 6:253/514ff.; 6:487/689ff.).

Hegel most emphasizes this logical sense of spirit where he states the conclusion of the argument to be discussed in the next chapter, below: insofar as something understands the line of thought in the *Logic*, something thinks in a way that generates a diversity of thought determinations out of itself, and comes to understand itself as that which thinks in a way generating diversity—as “spirit” in the logical sense. Note the independence of this desired conclusion from the details in the previous section: it is beyond the official job of the *Logic* to ask whether whatever understands the *Logic* is specifically a human being, or forms friendships, and so on. But I will return to this argument below.

There are also connections between our present topic and our previous discussion of substance. Given the previous discussion, it is clear that an *absolute* idea would be a process connecting universal, particular, and individual that makes for an *absolute* or complete case of substance. The biological is incompletely substantial, and the non-teleological, as we saw above, exists but is not substantial. At one point, the *Logic* makes this claim that spirit absolutely is by connecting the logical idea of spirit, which is for itself and so free, with the term “infinity”:

The infinite *is*, in a more intense sense than the first immediate being; it is the true being; the elevation above restriction. At the mention of

¹⁵ See also EL §234Z.

the infinite, soul and spirit *light up*, for in the infinite the spirit *is* at home. . . . [I]t rises to itself, to the light of its thinking, its universality, its freedom. (WL 5:150/109).

The same point is made by Hegel's famous claims that substance must be understood as subject or spirit. So where the EL emphasizes the language of *the* idea and *the* concept, and understanding these in terms of "the free concept" (§213R), lecture notes emphasize a version of the famous claim: "the idea is *subject*. *Substance*, if it is to become true, must be apprehended as *subject*" (VL 208/212).¹⁶ But the point cannot be to modify Spinoza, accepting his substance that everything is "in," and then adding to this a feature like self-consciousness. For the absolute idea is no substrate. Nor is it an individual. It is a process or movement, and one connecting kind and particular individual. And the point cannot be that everything real is substance, and so subject or idea; Hegel has argued that substance necessarily requires something insubstantial.

I will call Hegel's central desired conclusion here a claim for the *metaphysical priority* of the absolute idea and spirit (in the logical sense). The point of the terminology is simple: metaphysics concerns reason and its completeness; the absolute idea is the complete form of reason; so this takes metaphysical priority over everything. In metaphysics, the absolute idea is highest, most substantial, and the infinite. But the point is not that everything metaphysically depends on the absolute idea. Rather, the only dependence relation goes the other way: the complete form of reason is a process or movement that depends for its realization on the otherwise indifferent existence of incomplete forms of reason, as realizers.

Similarly, we can use the term "idealism" for assertions of priority of any form of idea, mind, self-consciousness, or the like. A metaphysical "idealism" would claim a metaphysical priority. So the view discussed in this section is a metaphysical form of idealism: it asserts a metaphysical priority of the absolute idea and spirit (in the logical sense).¹⁷ But not, clearly, any form of idealism in the sense of a claim that everything real is either a mental substance-as-substratum, or else a perception "in" such a mind.

¹⁶ Of course, there is a famous version of the claim in the *Phenomenology* (§25). About that book I will have to limit myself to saying that *if* the project there is compatible with the *Logic* (as I think that it is), then the point there cannot be about substance monism, but must also be about a process involving universal, particular, and individual, leaving some things that are not themselves spirit, and not completely substantial.

¹⁷ This is not a claim about how to interpret Hegel's use of the term; I think that it could be extended to that purpose, but lack the space here to defend this extension. I would focus on WL 5:172/124–25, about which see also Westphal (1989, 143) and Stern (2009, 58).

9.3 Epistemological Monism and Idealism

Considering this account of the absolute idea as a response to Kant, however, raises an obvious question: The problem raised in Kant's *Dialectic* concerns the end or goal of *all theoretical inquiry*.¹⁸ But Hegel responds with an account of the absolute idea on which it is not the case that everything is a form of the absolute idea. For example, the non-teleological, lawful concepts discussed before the transition to "The Idea" are not forms of the idea. So, on the face of it, the absolute idea would be the wrong goal to seek when trying to explain the lawful. This threatens at very least a local form of the skeptical hopelessness Kant is so concerned about. And that would likely be a decisive drawback in a theory claiming to better respond to Kant's issues concerning reason.

But note that Kant himself faces a version of a parallel problem. On Kant's account, reason guides theoretical inquiry via an interest in following any series of conditions to completion, establishing knowledge of the unconditioned. But he argues that we can never know anything unconditioned. So why shouldn't the result be the skepticism about theoretical inquiry, which Kant finds unacceptable? Kant's basic response is to appeal to *approximation*. That is, he argues that we can at least uncover the sorts of conditions that make explanatory progress, specifically in that we are at least heading in the direction that would, if we could follow to the end, bring us to a complete satisfaction of the interest in explanation. So with the guidance of reason we are supposed to be able to progress in scientific inquiry "asymptotically, as it were, i.e., merely by approximation" (A663/B691).¹⁹

Now compare Hegel's account of lawful concepts. Say we ask why some *X* neutralizes some *Y*. And imagine that this is all that there is. Here we can discover that the observed substance is an instance of a kind that is linked to the kind of the other interacting substance. But our current problem is that it is unclear why this should count as any progress toward the goal of theoretical inquiry. On the face of it, we do not gain more explanatory insight into or understanding of the world if we only have at basis the idea that some *X* neutralizes *Y* because that is its nature, any more than we would from appeals to dormitive virtue. Thus, the threat that inquiry, at least on such domains, would turn out to be pointless, if there is nothing more to find there.²⁰

¹⁸ I build here on the results of Kreines (2008a).

¹⁹ See Kitcher's (1986) account of this; I defend an alternative in Kreines (2009).

²⁰ Granted, if kind *X* just is the kind that interacts thus and so with *Y*, then there is a sense in which it is *necessary* that, if something is *X*, then it so reacts. But this seems to open rather than to answer the explanatory question: why is there kind *X* instead of some other kind *X**, which would interact differently.

But the matter looks different if Hegel is correct about the absolute idea as self-determining. Of course, I have said that this can change nothing about the *metaphysics* of the lawful: the lawful itself is no form of, and does not metaphysically depend on, the absolute idea; to say otherwise would be to contradict Hegel's arguments for the greater explicability of the idea, which requires its dependence on what is itself not the idea. Still, Hegel's account opens up a different way of accounting for the *epistemological* side of explanation—the sense in which finding explanations should produce insight into or *understanding* of the world, or a way of finding it *intelligible*. Note, in particular, that the objective account of explanation, above, focuses on a metaphysical requirement on explanation, namely, that it uncovers some real form of reason or ground. But this does not conflict with a claim that, in seeking explanation, we are seeking distinctive epistemological payoff, in the sense of a kind of understanding.²¹ And if Hegel is right about the absolute idea, then explaining in lawful cases could produce such understanding in virtue of the difference and similarity between the lawful and the absolute idea—and so on with everything else, in virtue of its relation to the self-determination of the absolute idea.

So theoretical inquiry into the lawful can have just as much of a point, on Hegel's view, as it does on Kant's: both views appeal to approximation. On Kant's view, the limit is epistemic: It is a limitation or restriction of our knowledge. On Hegel's view, the limit is metaphysical: there is no in principle limit to our knowledge of the lawful, or of reasons generally; but the nature of the lawful itself is limited, or such that whatever we discover there will at best approximate the interest of reason; still, even incomplete explanation there produces explanatory insight or understanding, insofar as it is an approximation in relation to completeness.

Hegel's view, then, is that successful explanation of *X* carries at least these two necessary conditions:

- (i) *Metaphysical*: identification of some *Y* that is a reason in the world for *X*.
- (ii) *Epistemological*: some way of understanding this form of reason as at least an approximation of the completeness offered by the absolute idea.

The second requirement amounts to an *epistemological* form of monism and of idealism. It is epistemological idealism because it is a claim for the epistemological priority of the absolute idea. This may not be what we expect from an epistemological idealism, for the point is not that any *knowledge*, in the most familiar sense of knowledge of what is the case, depends on the absolute idea.

²¹ Cf. Kim's (1994, 60) case that a "metaphysical" account of explanation raises epistemological issues about understanding that it does not itself resolve.

Rather, the ultimate *intelligibility* of everything depends on the intelligibility of the absolute idea. (I will use the term *intelligibility*, from this point onward, to refer to this epistemic payoff of explanatory success, so that explicability requires only finding some form of reason in the world, and intelligibility requires also insight into how this approximates complete reason.) So Hegel advocates two different forms of the priority of the absolute idea:

Metaphysical priority: the absolute idea is the absolutely complete form of reason in the world, and so prior in a metaphysics of reason.

Epistemological priority: all intelligibility of everything depends on the intelligibility of the absolute idea.

The latter amounts to epistemological *monism* because it means, more specifically, that the intelligibility of anything depends on its relation to the absolute idea, in one all-encompassing system of knowledge.

These epistemological claims are important, to be sure, but note that their importance does not mitigate the sense in which Hegel's project is focused on the metaphysics of reason. For these claims are responses to problems that are shaped through and through by that metaphysical focus. Just consider: There is a sense in which Hegel seeks to justify all theoretical inquiry, in response to a skeptical problem. But that last sentence, read in any other context, would suggest a very misleading picture. It would suggest that Hegel's project aims at skeptical problems about all knowledge, like the concern about whether there is really a pen sitting on the desk in front of me. And it would suggest the aim of providing either something like a foundation, from which all knowledge could follow and inherit features like certainty—or else an alternative to a foundation with comparable benefits with respect to all knowledge. But we have seen that none of this is Hegel's focus. Nor is this because Hegel takes the same epistemological topic as basic, but responds with a form of deflationism rather than foundationism. Rather, Hegel's basic topic is something else: reason in the world. This raises and shapes very specific epistemological or skeptical problems, not concerning all knowledge, but knowledge of reasons and their completeness, and how the knowledge gained in inquiry relates to this. The topic here is not establishing anything like a foundation for other sciences, to safeguard them from the *beginning*, but more consideration of how their knowledge might successfully aim at or approximate their *end*.

I turn now to Hegel's terminology for his combination of claims for metaphysical and also epistemological priority. The account in the *Logic* is the most difficult, so we can again best approach it by means of the broader organization of Hegel's system. Here Hegel's point is that we can explain nature insofar as we find in it a distant trace of the kind of self-determining system that is fully

realized only in our own case, of spirit. When we explain nature, we are in this sense finding an approximation of ourselves within it. It is in this light that we can understand a complex formulation at the very end of the *Encyclopedia*, combining three conclusions that otherwise seem incompatible, insofar as it is initially hard to see how spirit could be metaphysically prior to, and yet dependent on, nature. But we have seen that Hegel's metaphysics includes both a claim (i) that spirit is *metaphysically* prior to nature, in virtue of its freedom, and also a case that (ii) this is compatible with a *dependence* of spirit on nature, or spirit's presupposition of nature; to this Hegel adds an *epistemological* sense in which (iii) spirit understands nature in creating a system of knowledge that finds traces of itself throughout everything, thus understanding nature as its own. Adding numbers for these points to the text yields:

[i] As spirit is free, its manifestation is [iii] to *set forth* [Setzen] Nature as *its* world; but because it is reflection, it, in thus setting forth its world, at the same time [ii] *presupposes* [Voraussetzen] the world as a nature independently existing. [iii] In the intellectual sphere to reveal is thus to create a world as its being—a being in which the mind procures the affirmation and [i] *truth* of its freedom. (EG §384)²²

We can see a similar point at the very beginning of the *Philosophy of Nature*. Here Hegel emphasizes the limit to explicability, noted above, or the “powerlessness of nature” (EN §250). Nature does not realize *the* concept, only a “trace” of it. *But*, this trace must not be confused with a claim that nature is a metaphysical realization of the concept: “one must . . . be careful to avoid taking such trace of the concept for the total determination of the object”; here Hegel advocates understanding nature by analogy but also warns that analogies can mislead us by suggesting a “sublime freedom” in nature (EN §250R). The error Hegel is warning us about is that this fits his metaphysics only in the case of spirit. Given the traces, Hegel can also hold that we understand nature by analogy, insofar as we find different traces of the concept everywhere. So, natural science

is directed to a knowledge of the *universal* aspect of nature . . . a knowledge of forces, laws and genera, whose content must not be a simple aggregate, but arranged in orders and classes, must present itself as an organism. (EN §246)

²² Part of the complexity here involves Hegel's attempt to connect his view with religion; I turn to that complexity in §10.5.

But here too we must be careful with the analogy: Hegel claims that reality as a whole has a structure or organization, but not in the sense of a metaphysics on which everything has a complete reason in virtue of its place within a single whole organism. Rather, the metaphysics claims that reality is organized insofar as it has the structure of a series of levels, which *differ* precisely insofar as things on different levels either have *or lack* complete reasons to different degrees. Similarly, they differ insofar as some differ from the biological, and so are explicable to different degrees.

With respect to the text of the *Logic*, some details concerning the epistemological dimension of its conclusion will have to wait for the discussion of Hegel's dialectical method below, but it is possible to anticipate some central points about how each step at the conclusion of the book concerns something that approximates the next step. In mechanism, the concept does explain a kind of self-moving system—the concept of matter as gravitation explains rotation around a center of gravity; but this involves no determinate differences. Lawfully interacting distinct kinds, or chemism, remedy this lack of determinacy:

The chemical object is distinguished from the mechanical in that the latter is a totality indifferent to determinateness, whereas in the chemical object the determinateness, and hence the *reference to other*, and the mode and manner of this reference, belong to its nature.
(WL 6:429/645)

But chemism has another limitation: no such kind or concept of a lawfully interacting kind has explanatory importance of its own; the determinacy here *gets lost* in reference to others. So even chemism, or lawful interaction, falls short—although in a way that clearly indicates an approximation, or being on the way: “it is not yet for itself that totality of self-determination” (WL 6:429/645). What reason seeks is something that combines the self-moving system from mechanism with the determinate differences from chemism—this is the idea in the form of life. And what reason ultimately seeks is something that combines these in a way that also explains out of itself those determinate differences—this is the absolute idea. Granted, mechanism and chemism each lack something; but by this same token, we can at least find in each a distant *approximation* for what reason seeks.

For the *Logic's* expression of the resulting view, consider these elements: First, there is Hegel's claim that the absolute idea is the endpoint sought in all inquiry. In Hegel's terms, the complete form of reason (*Vernunft*) in the world or the rational (*das Vernünftige*) is the absolute idea, whose full realization requires something that subjectively comprehends its own concept. Here, in adding the

epistemological to the metaphysical idealism, Hegel borrows a more Kantian way of referring to reason—in terms of an impulse, directed to a kind of knowledge or cognition. So reason seeks to understand everything relative to itself, or by analogy with itself. Or, in terms from the last chapter of the *Logic*, the idea

is both the manner of cognition, of the concept *subjectively* aware of itself, and the *objective* manner, or rather the *substantiality of things*. . . . It is therefore not only the highest *force* of reason, or rather its *sole* and absolute *force*, but also reason's highest and sole *impulse* to find and recognize *itself through itself in all things*. (WL 6:552/737)

We can now see the same combination of metaphysical and epistemological priority even in a passage that most famously can seem to suggest that Hegel has a metaphysics of the complete explicability of everything. This is the famous *Doppelsatz*, present not only in the Preface to the PR but also the Introduction to the EL:

What is rational is actual;
and what is actual is rational. (EL §6)

This can certainly seem to mean that *everything* is supposed to be a form of the rational, or the absolute idea, or completely satisfying to reason. Yet Hegel is at pains to emphasize that he does not use the term “actual” to mean everything, but in a more discriminating sense: “[a]ny sensible consideration of the world discriminates . . . what truly merits the name ‘actuality’” (EL §6). Lecture notes deny that we should “call every brain wave, error, evil, and such-like ‘actual’, as well as every existence, however wilted and transient it may be” (EL §6Z). “The actual” (*das Wirkliche*) is supposed to suggest what is effective or what produces (*das Wirkende*) (e.g., EL §163R). So the lawfully interacting kinds exist but have only the barest trace of borrowed actuality, since each is effective but only on account of their relations to others, and not on their own account. And it is no surprise that we are supposed to “regard everything *as being* actual only to the extent that it has the idea in it and expresses it” (WL 6:464/671): the metaphysical proposal is that existents are actual to a greater or lesser degree—the greater *or lesser* degree to which they are rational or express the idea.²³ This metaphysics fits with the epistemological claim

²³ The *Doppelsatz* itself, then, has this meaning that is metaphysical, and not itself about endorsing or critiquing political institutions. Space prohibits addressing whether any such endorsement or critique is also supposed to follow. For a case that the point is not normative, in this sense, see Stern (2009, chapter 3).

that reason's goal guiding theoretical inquiry is to explain things as completely as they allow, understanding them by comparison with the completeness of reason, which is ultimately realized in the case of something reasoning and so free. And this is the explicit aim of philosophy as Hegel conceives it:

it is to be viewed as the highest goal of the philosophical science to bring about the reconciliation of the reason that is conscious of itself with the reason that *exists*, or with actuality. (EL §6)

In sum, we have seen that the *Logic*, in discussing the absolute idea, discusses a form of the idea, and so of a process connecting universal, particular, and individual. Specifically, here the process involves a thinking or reflection, which would render the immanent purpose freedom rather than the self-preservation of life. Hegel is arguing that this idea would be metaphysically prior to everything, in being a complete form of reason. And he is arguing that it would be epistemologically prior to everything, in that the intelligibility of everything would depend on the complete intelligibility of the absolute idea, even though some things are not metaphysically such as to be themselves completely explicable. It remains to look to the *Logic* and its distinctive form of argument, via dialectic and contradiction, for the metaphysical conclusion that there is such a thing as this absolute idea—and the epistemological conclusion that we can understand everything in terms of its relation to this absolute idea, as part of system of knowledge.

Method and Conclusion of the *Logic*

Dialectic, Contradiction, and Absolute Knowledge

It is absurd to attempt to reason with one who will not reason about anything.

—Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1006a13

We have seen above how the *Logic* explains the absolute idea, which would be a complete explainer. But the *Logic* also aims to demonstrate the metaphysical conclusion that there is a sense in which there must really be an absolute idea, and the epistemological conclusion that everything real can be understood in terms of its relation to the absolute idea in one system. I turn now to how the method of the book and its ending are supposed to support those conclusions.

The basic story is as follows. I begin (§10.1) with Hegel’s account of reason’s constraints on how philosophy can begin, and why these compel philosophy to attempt to take the form of a circle. This will again direct our attention to the crux of the issue with respect to Kant (§10.2): Why should the contradictions raised by philosophy support Hegel’s constructive metaphysics, rather than Kant’s restriction on knowledge? But there is also a special interpretive problem here: How can Hegel’s method turn on the need for contradictions to be resolved, while being compatible with his claim that there are real contradictions? Answering those questions will then make possible (§10.3) an interpretive approach to Hegel’s claim that the idea is the “truth” of everything, even what is not a form of the idea—and his claim that a “true infinity” is mediated by the finite. With these puzzle pieces ready to assemble, we can turn to (§10.4) the last stretch of text, not yet analyzed, at the *Logic*’s conclusion: the surprising turn there toward consideration of the nature and importance of *method*. The main idea here will be that, if the process of thinking through

contradictions can lead to a successful account of the reality of something completely explicable, then it can justify the initial commitment of philosophy to there being some point to theoretical inquiry, and so some complete form of reason in the world. And if we ourselves can think this process through to Hegel's conclusions concerning the absolute idea and spirit as the rational, then this is testament to the reality of the absolute idea and spirit—of something that is for itself in a manner that generates determinate diversity out of its unified concept. This method is supposed to establish a kind of necessity for Hegel's results, but one that is epistemic: any successful philosophical project should be forced toward Hegel's conclusions about the absolute idea, and there can be no possible course of reasoning that is sufficient to support contrary conclusions.

I can then summarize my interpretation of Hegel's theoretical philosophy in terms of a comparison of Hegel's conclusions with the rationalist monism associated with Spinoza, comparing some other interpretive approaches as well (§10.5). I conclude by considering prominent worries about the *Logic* and by drawing some more general philosophical conclusions (§10.6).

10.1 The Problem of the Beginning and the Need for a Circle

Hegel frequently emphasizes that philosophy faces problems about its beginning. In order to understand the *Logic's* conclusion, what is most important is a problem following from two constraints on any philosophical program.

First, Hegel holds that philosophy must not accept mere presuppositions—nor claims to supposedly immediate knowledge, not mediated by argument or evidence. Taking up the standpoint of philosophy means committing to justification. We can see this most clearly where Hegel specifies which sorts of philosophers fail to understand the “perplexity about a beginning.” That difficulty

is outright denied by those who begin, like a shot from a pistol, from their inner revelation, from faith, intellectual intuition, etc. and who would be exempt from *method* and *logic*. (WL 5:65/46–47; cf. PhG §27)

This strong emphasis on the denial of purely immediate knowledge is also clear in the introductory material in the *Encyclopedia*, where Hegel takes such appeals as a dominant trend among his contemporaries. Sometimes Jacobi is the central example; sometimes Hegel addresses similar arguments

to Schelling, with whom Hegel himself had earlier collaborated, before later disagreements. Hegel often connects the point to criticism of the ways he sees his contemporaries as claiming access to higher standpoints described by Kant, as in the reference to “intellectual intuition” in the last citation.¹ There is not enough space to consider whether Hegel here reads his contemporaries fairly; regardless, Hegel’s criticisms of appeals to supposedly immediate knowledge show us something important about his own commitments. “[P]hilosophy,” Hegel says in the *Encyclopedia*, “permits neither a mere offering of assurances, nor imaginings” (EL §77). Hegel elsewhere includes Schelling with Jacobi under the general heading of appeals to “immediate knowledge” (VGP 20:428/3:519). He reads Schelling as claiming an immediate, intuitive grasp of reality all at once, allowing knowledge that there is an “absolute” or “reason” in which all is one—in which subject and object are one, so that there is an “indifference” of subjectivity and objectivity. Hegel responds:

What is lacking in Schelling’s philosophy is . . . that the point of indifference of subjectivity and objectivity, or the concept of reason, is absolutely presupposed. . . . When we philosophize, we want to have proven that it is so. But if we begin with intellectual intuition, that constitutes an oracle to which we have to give way.²

Regardless of the justice of his readings of others, clearly Hegel commits his own philosophy to the standard of mediation by forms of justification or argument.³ That is part of why I have insisted from the beginning (§0.6) on seeking to understand Hegel in terms of his arguments.

Second, Hegel holds that philosophy must aspire from the beginning to an account of the absolute.⁴ Hegel’s engagement with Kant’s Dialectic makes this easy to understand. Kant has argued that all theoretical inquiry requires guidance by reason, or ideas of reason’s absolute goal or end. Hegel applies this point to philosophical inquiry, concluding that it necessarily seeks reason’s ends. We can compare Kant’s worry that so-called indifferentist philosophy unknowingly pursues metaphysics (Ax). In Hegel’s terms, philosophy

¹ See also Kreines (2007); Westphal on Hegel on Jacobi (1989a) and on forms of intuitive understanding (2000); and Beiser (2005, 157).

² VGP 20:435/3:525–26. For the sort of claim in Schelling that Hegel may be thinking of, see, e.g., Schelling (2001a, 4:362/377).

³ There is a sense in which knowledge is supposed to be both mediated and immediate (e.g., EL §78); but for present purposes what is important is that it cannot be purely immediate.

⁴ See also PhG §75 against a deflationary alternative.

exists only as an inner necessity that is stronger than the subject, a necessity that tirelessly drives its spirit “so that it may overcome” and may procure for reason’s urges the satisfaction it deserves. (EL 8:38/p. 26)

Or, philosophy “attests . . . to the inner drive of a rational insight that goes further and alone gives human beings their dignity” (EL 8:13/pp. 6–7). Insofar as philosophy is an expression of reason, in this sense, it *must* aim for the object of reason—the completeness of reason, or the absolute.

These two demands combine to make for a problem: the second requires that philosophy *begin* by taking there to be something absolute, or something at which philosophy can aim—thus taking this as *immediate*, and seeming to violate from the start the first demand to forego appeals to just such immediacy.

Hegel’s proposed solution is for philosophy to aim for a *circle*: it must in its progress demonstrate that there is something absolute, thus mediating what was at first only immediate. Hegel takes this circle, and the need for it, to be distinctive of philosophy. The idea is that another science is what it is in virtue of given presuppositions about its objects or domain: physics is what it is given certain assumptions about the physical, for example. Philosophy must rather investigate its own beginning, including even the assumption that theoretical inquiry is possible at all.⁵ Philosophy “seems to start like the other sciences with a subjective presupposition, namely a particular object, such as space, number, etc.” But the “standpoint” of philosophy,

which thus appears to be an *immediate* one, must transform itself into a *result* within the science itself. . . . In this way, philosophy shows itself to be a sphere that circles back into itself. (EL §17; cf. PhG §6)

Note that there is a sense in which Kant sees the same project as necessary, at least when explaining the importance of the Transcendental Dialectic: The epistemological argument of the first *Critique* requires an “experiment providing a checkup.” To experiment, we must assume that we can have knowledge of the unconditioned and try to make sense of it; what we find is contradictions that prove it impossible and verify our epistemic limits (Bxx).⁶

Hegel simply agrees that the attempt is necessary and generates contradictions, but argues for a different response to them. More specifically, the *Logic* proceeds at each step by considering different “logical determinations” as

⁵ Note: the aim is not to justify the sciences in response to a prior general epistemological or skeptical problem; it is to respond to a problem about reasons in the world.

⁶ Again following Ameriks (1985, 3) on the *Critique’s* need for this argument.

“definitions of the absolute” (EL §85). At each step along the way, thinking a logical determination results in contradiction.⁷ But Hegel argues that each contradiction supports a determinate refinement in the attempt to account for the absolute. The beginning is the simplest possible way of holding the commitment to something being absolute: the absolute as simply pure “Being.”⁸ And Hegel’s goal is to come by this procedure to something that is absolute, in the respect of an absolute form of reason, or to an absolute definition of the absolute. And he does come to this, beginning with “the idea”: “The definition of the absolute, that it is the *idea*, is itself absolute” (EL §213R).

This method itself is supposed to provide for the *Logic* a way of thinking of spirit as realization of the absolute idea, which is distinct from the discussions of human social life in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. In both cases, the key is that spirit is for itself in a sense that will explain the emergence and also resolution of differences out of its own nonetheless unified nature.⁹ In the case of the *Logic* the approach is via *thinking*: spirit (in the logical sense) is what thinks, and so entangles itself in the problems of philosophy, and in this way generates from itself the distinctions between different steps along the way of the *Logic*, until it comes to the conclusion that its own thinking is what realizes the absolute idea, and so justifies that project. If we follow this process of thinking, then spirit (in this logical sense) is our kind, and our following along is spirit coming to itself as the resolution of the contradictions along the way. In Hegel’s terms, spirit uncovers the dialectical contradictions, generates thereby distinct conflicting philosophical positions, resolves the contradiction, and yet does this all out of its own unified nature, and so does not lose itself in the diversity but is “with itself” on its own path throughout:

philosophy . . . seeks to satisfy its loftiest inwardness, namely *thinking*, and to secure thinking as its object. In this way, spirit comes to *itself*. . . . But while going about its business it so happens that thinking becomes entangled in contradictions. . . . [T]hinking does not let go of itself [I]t remains true to itself, ‘so that it may overcome,’ and in thinking bring about the resolution of its own contradictions.
(EL §11)

So Hegel’s aim here is to justify knowledge by spirit of spirit (in the logical sense) as realizing the absolute idea.

⁷ Following also my account of this process at Kreines (2004, 55–56).

⁸ Hegel argues that this must be first (WL 5:65/45), comparing Parmenides (WL 5:84/60).

⁹ See also Bubner on how the *Logic*, through determinate negation, “generates its own content” (2003, 72).

But this is not, yet, any reason to conclude that Hegel might succeed. It is rather to say that the greatest weight rests on Hegel's ability to argue that the contradictions met along the way support his own conclusions, rather than Kant's.

10.2 Contradiction Everywhere: Resolving and Preserving It

While Hegel's various discussions of contradiction deserve independent treatment in their own right, I have at least already defended an interpretation of the specific form of contradiction involved in the lawful (§7.3). For our purposes, it is most important to build from there toward responses to two specific problems. The first and most obvious is just this: what is the philosophical case for why dialectical contradictions should not support Kant's limitation of knowledge, but rather Hegel's succession of determinate refinements in conceptions of the absolute? The second concerns the coherence of Hegel's claims: if Hegel's method turns on the claim that any contradiction encountered along the way *must be overcome or resolved*, then how can this be compatible with Hegel's claim for the *reality* of contradiction?

With respect to the first problem, although the argument is not yet clear, the basic claim was covered in §7.3: Kant is correct that contradictions are necessary, or that "the dialectic makes up the very nature of thinking" and "a cardinal aspect of logic." But we should not conclude that the project of a philosophy of reason fails, or conclude with "misology" (EL §11). When we examine something determinate and discover contradictions, we must not prefer the "abstract negation" (WL 6:562–63/745), which would conclude that the absolute must be something utterly different than and beyond this determinate something. Rather, determinate negation should lead us out of each contradiction to better, determinate candidate accounts of the absolute.

To see the force of this proposal, take as a central example the contradiction in lawful interacting kinds, discussed in "Chemism." Given the thoroughgoing dependence, a judgment about what such a kind does will be true and false. How should we react?

Consider first the path which Hegel warns against: abstract negation. We could on discovering this contradiction conclude that the absolute must be the abstract negation of, utterly beyond, or the inverse image of any given step in a regress of lawful kinds defined by relations to others in powers or dispositions: a complete ground for this regress. But when we think along this kind of path, we are really just confusing explainers with indifferent substrata, or

confused by the “*perspective of the understanding alone on the objects of reason*” (EL §27).

Instead, we should take the path of determinate negation: We must conclude that the lawful is not absolute; and we should learn from the contradiction of the lawful what determinate account of the absolute would fare better. More specifically, we learn that incompleteness involves concepts without explanatory import of their own, and that tells us that completeness would involve a concept that does carry explanatory import of its own.

Even taking life as absolute generates contradiction (WL 6:485/687), but we can learn from this how the absolute idea would involve a concept that explains diversity out of itself. Thus, the arguments we have considered—concerning the indifference of substrata, the confusion of substrata with reasons involved in positing metaphysical foundations for the lawful, and so on—are supposed to support Hegel’s claim for his own resolution of antinomies, over Kant’s.

But we now come to our second problem: this method seems to presuppose that contradiction must always be *resolved*. On the one hand, this sounds like an insistence that we must not rest content at the end of the day with the conclusion that any contradiction is real.¹⁰ On the other hand, Hegel seems to consistently insist that we must, in response to Kant, hold precisely that contradiction is real (e.g., WL 5:276/201), and it would be best if an interpretation did justice to this too.

I think that we can solve this problem, if we recognize *reason* as the organizing focus of Hegel’s project, and the way in which the arguments at the end of the *Logic* address that topic. Consider the case of the contradiction in the lawful again, and the contrast between abstract and determinate negation in response. Which reaction recognizes contradiction is real?

The path of abstract negation, which Hegel argues against, will end up denying the reality of the lawful as such. The idea here is to hold that anything really lawful must be explained by some underlying ground beyond the lawful itself. But to really be lawful would be to be grounded in the lawful, and not something utterly different beyond it. For example, to say that the non-teleological turns out to have a teleological ground would be to say that it is, after all, teleologically explicable, and not non-teleological. Or, holding that the lawful must be grounded in a substratum, because it must have some ground, will then push us in the familiar way toward eliminativism, specifically when the substratum turns out to be indifferent to lawful relations—a ground that does not ground anything. Either way, lawfulness will turn out to be how things look when judged from a partial perspective that neglects their further ground.

¹⁰ McTaggart (1896, 9–10) reasons in this way that Hegel’s method shows that he does not really assert the reality of contradictions.

Compare the way in which ancient monists conclude from contradictions concerning motion and the like that *these must be unreal*, leaving real only their abstract negation in an unchanging One:

When such a contradiction is recognized, the conclusion is usually drawn that “*Therefore, the object is nothing,*” just as *Zeno* first demonstrated with regard to movement. . . . [T]he *One*, i.e. the absolute, neither comes into being nor passes away. (EL §89R)

So the path of abstract negation will end up replacing or eliminating the phenomena generating contradiction, concluding that the contradiction is not real.

Now contrast Hegel’s path of determinate negation. Along this path, we recognize that there can be no conceivable further grounds for the lawful as such, for example; in this way we save the lawful, as itself, from elimination or replacement. And this path will lead to the demonstration of the *need* to preserve the lawful as such, insofar as the successor and superior attempt to account for the absolute will be in terms of the idea and firstly life, which we can comprehend only by thinking of it as realized in something that is not the idea, or in the lawful. Surprisingly, then, precisely the method that insists on resolving any contradiction turns out also to be the method that requires recognizing the reality of contradiction, in just the sense that we have discovered contradiction within the lawful.

We can understand in these terms Hegel’s famous use of the term “sublation” or *Aufhebung* to describe his method. The well-known idea is that the “sublation” of each step along the way is supposed to both *cancel* it and yet also *preserve* it. But we must not rest content with the formula or terminology. We can now explain how something could be both canceled and yet preserved: The lawful, for example, is canceled insofar as it is shown to fail as an account of the absolute, which will also mean that it is relatively insubstantial compared to what will follow. But it is also preserved, in that the method demands precisely not denying its reality. Rather, we must conclude that the lawful exists, but not as a form of the absolute, or the idea, or substantial.

The resulting conclusion in Hegel will be that *everything* contains contradiction within it.¹¹ There are two basic kinds of case here: Some things have contradiction within them, which they do not resolve. The lawful is a paradigmatic case of this. The idea, by contrast, is different. But it is not different in the manner of the Eleatic One, above, without contradiction. Any form of the idea has

¹¹ E.g., “All things are in themselves contradictory” (WL 6:74/381). See de Boer (2010b, 364) for a different reading of this passage.

contradiction within, and also itself resolves this. A partial case is the living, or the idea as life. And one sense in which life has contradiction, and resolves it, concerns the persistence through change, discussed above (§8.4): the leafy plant *is* the leafless seed. What makes these one, persisting through change is the immanent end toward which the plant itself strives, changing itself. So it both differentiates itself from itself and unifies itself. And “[s]omething is alive . . . only to the extent that it contains contradiction within itself” and can “endure contradiction within.” But the ultimate case is the absolute idea and spirit in the logical sense: this explains diverse, contradictory forms *out of its own unified nature*, and so contains but also overcomes these contradictions. Thus Hegel also refers in this same context to the thinking through of the *Logic* itself: “*Speculative thought* consists only in this, in holding firm to contradiction and to itself in the contradiction” (WL 6:76/382–83). And the *Logic* says that “spirit” is what “exhibits contradiction at its most extreme form” (WL 6:488/690). So while everything contains contradiction, only special cases also resolve the contradiction within themselves.

Surprisingly, the way in which Hegel’s method turns on contradiction brings him close to Aristotle’s famous argument for his law of contradiction. Aristotle’s law is: “the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect” (*Metaphysics* IV.3, 1005b19). Aristotle notes that there is a sense in which this principle cannot be “demonstrated”: it cannot be deduced because a deduction would have to presuppose it. But Aristotle can for just this reason “demonstrate negatively”: he can argue that anyone denying the law would be incapable of such rational discourse at all and that “it is absurd to attempt to reason with one who will not reason about anything” (*Metaphysics* IV.3, 1006a13). There is a similar thought in Leibniz, noted by Margaret Wilson. Leibniz says:

Thus the principle of contradiction is the principle of all truths of reason, and if it is given up all reasoning is given up.¹²

Wilson notes that this is an *epistemic* necessity for the principle: it is “an indispensable condition of reasoning or knowledge itself” and so “epistemologically indispensable in this sense” (1994, 117).

There are senses in which Hegel’s position is both near and far: *First*, Hegel agrees that the very project of reasoning or theoretical inquiry must begin with a substantial commitment, whose violation would mean giving up inquiry. The beginning is *epistemically necessary*, in this respect.

¹² Cited by Wilson (1994, 117).

Second, this similarity gives us a vantage point on how and why Hegel's focus on reason is also such a radical departure from Aristotle and many other philosophers, which will crucially shape the whole execution of the *Science of Logic*. For Hegel is arguing that the necessary initial commitment cannot be understood in terms of the form of judgment. It cannot be understood, for example, in Aristotle's principle that one *subject* not both have and lack the same *attribute*. Nor can it be understood in terms of the idea of a system of judgments enjoying the right connections in terms of a formal logic of judgments. It cannot be understood in terms of what Hegel calls "the understanding." For, first, the commitment has to do with *reason*: in beginning to philosophize, one must commit to there being something that is such as could satisfy reason. Second, and given the considerations we have just examined concerning contradiction, carrying out the project beginning from this commitment is precisely what is supposed to require *jettisoning* the standpoint of the understanding, or ceasing to take the perspective of the understanding on the objects of reason, and so allowing the sort of real contradiction Hegel uncovers (as, for example, within the lawful). Portrayed as a response to Aristotle, the point is that there is a yet more basic commitment required for rational inquiry and consideration of it shows that we can and even must give up Aristotle's law.

Third, this last divergence from Aristotle also brings out a further point of comparison: Aristotle's position is that if real contradiction is *allowed* then reasoning is impossible; Hegel's position is that if real contradiction is *allowed to stand unresolved*, then reasoning or theoretical inquiry is impossible. Consider, for example, a point in the EL at which Hegel allows real contradiction, contra Aristotle: Hegel says that "the notion of *polarity* so prominent in physics" will not fit with what he here calls "the ordinary logic" (EL §119). But lecture notes take a carefully balanced position: On the one hand, it is wrong to claim that there is no real contradiction; Hegel returns to examples from his account of chemism: "an acid is in itself at the same time a base." So "it is ridiculous to claim that contradiction cannot be thought." But, on the other hand, there is something right in the neighborhood of the claim that there cannot be real contradiction:

What is right about this claim is merely this: that the matter does not end there in the contradiction and that the contradiction sublates itself through itself. (EL §119Z2)

So if we came to an end with a contradiction that could not be resolved in a better account of the absolute, then we could not demonstrate in though the knowability and reality of the absolute, or the aim of theoretical inquiry; so philosophical inquiry would be pointless. But Hegel is arguing that the contradictions can be

resolved, in an account of the absolute idea.¹³ The result is a claim for a kind of epistemic necessity: no course of reasoning could come to contrary conclusions, because it would thereby undercut its own viability; any theoretical reasoning must necessarily come to Hegel's conclusions about the absolute idea.

10.3 Truth and the True Infinite

At this point, there are two last topics to touch on, before putting these results to work in an interpretation of the end of the *Logic*: truth and the true infinite. Each deserves more sustained treatment; but in this context, it is only possible, and necessary, to show that the interpretation defended here allows a promising approach to each.

First, “[t]he idea is the *truth*” (EL §213R). Or:

The idea is the *adequate* concept, the objectively *true*, or the *true as such*. If anything has truth, it has it by virtue of its idea, or *something has truth only in so far as it is idea*. (WL 6:462/670)

This might initially seem to suggest that only the idea really exists, thus eliminating everything else. But this is neither what we have found so far, nor the point here.

To begin with, Hegel's terminology is again unusual. Hegel certainly does have a term that comes closer to what we ordinarily think of truth—he calls this “correctness” (*Richtigkeit*). He is then free to reconceive truth (*Wahrheit*) in terms of reason and the idea, just as he is arguing we must reconceive everything throughout philosophy. Correctness, then, concerns the agreement of a representation with what is represented. But the term “truth” is supposed to be reserved do something more important, or reason:

whoever calls *truth* the *correctness* of an *intuition* or a *perception*, the agreement of *representation* [*Vorstellung*] with the subject matter, has for a minimum no expression left for that which is the subject matter and the aim of philosophy. We should at least say of these that they are the truth of reason. (WL 6:318/562)¹⁴

¹³ Wolff (1999, 6) interprets Hegel as also endorsing, in a sense, the principle of non-contradiction, arguing that it rests on the necessity that all real contradiction be overcome or resolved.

¹⁴ Compare Wallace on this passage: I advocate approaching reason not at base in terms of an issue about “what is being, what is real, or what ‘one’ is” (2005, 230), but more fundamentally in terms of explanatory reasons and their completeness.

More specifically, we have *the idea* where we have an inner purpose, and so a normative standard, set by a concept so intimately related to particular individuals that it gives them their substance. And “truth” will be agreement of an object with such an immanent standard. Hegel’s examples are, unsurprisingly, often biological: it might be *correct* to judge that someone is sick; but to be sick is for the body to be partly malfunctioning relative to the standard of the concept, and so to be less than *true*.¹⁵ So where Hegel says that “finite things are finite” because they do not have concepts immanent in them, or providing their substance, he adds that there can be no question of such things being true: “That actual things are not congruent with the idea constitutes the side of their *finitude*, of their *untruth*” (WL 6:465/672). Such things are no form of the idea and have no truth.

Granted, with respect to these finite things, that last point expresses just “the side . . . of their untruth”; this raises the question of what their other side is. The point is not that they secretly do *metaphysically* contain or rest upon some hidden form of the idea, rendering them completely explicable and so true. If that were the point, then there would be no first side—no sense in which they fall short of the true or complete explicability. Their other “side” does concern a link to the idea, but only in an *epistemological* sense: the contradictions inherent in such things do at least point toward the idea, in containing the contradictions that force any rational inquiry toward the idea. So that which is not itself a form of the idea is not for this reason entirely without “truth”; rather, it has what truth it has not in itself but only in another—in the next step of the dialectic and ultimately in the idea. And so as Hegel proceeds from one step to the next, he tends to claim that each crucial step is “the truth of” the preceding. For example, Hegel argues in the chapters leading up to the transition to “The Idea” section that “*purposive connection* has proved to be the truth of *mechanism*.”¹⁶ Later he argues that spirit (logical sense) is the truth of life: “the idea of life . . . comes to itself, to its truth” with “spirit emerging” (EL §222).¹⁷

We can now proceed from truth to a brief note about the true infinite. Hegel famously argues near the beginning of the WL against conceiving the infinite as “posited over against the finite”; *that* is the conception of the “*bad infinite*, the infinite of the *understanding*,” which turns out to be merely a “finite infinite,”

¹⁵ §172Z; see also §24Z. Again I share the general strategy of approaching such issues via Hegel on life with Marcuse (1987, 146).

¹⁶ He includes (narrow sense) mechanism and chemism under the heading of mechanism here, insofar as “mechanism as well as chemism, are therefore included under natural necessity” (WL 6:437–38/652).

¹⁷ And in the larger system, spirit will be “the truth of” nature, even though spirit depends on nature as indifferent substrate: “spirit has for its presupposition nature, of which it is the truth” (EG §381).

insofar as it is limited by something else (WL 5:152/111). But this early section, on the infinite, also seems to make conflicting demands. It seems to hold that the infinite has priority over the finite; and yet different ways of making out this priority keep bringing Hegel back to a parallel between or parity of the infinite and the finite. For example, “the infinite and the finite are both this *movement* of each returning to itself through its negation” (WL 5:162/117). And Hegel certainly rejects here any foundationalist way of making out priority, or any view on which the infinite is a beginning (something that depends on nothing and on which all else depends) and for this reason first or prior in metaphysical importance: “*There is not an infinite which is infinite beforehand, and only afterwards does it find it necessary to become finite, to go forth into finitude*” (WL 5:170/123).

If we sought a solution *here*, concerning the infinite, we would have to rest at the end of the day with a seeming embrace of paradox for its own sake, like a proposal that the infinite is both prior to and yet not prior to the finite. But Hegel’s point is that this early material states a problem rather than, yet, a solution: the infinite must be metaphysically prior, and yet it depends on the finite; how could it be both? Only with the resources at the conclusion of the *Logic* is a solution supposed to be demonstrated and explained. We began to see this at two points above. First (§8.3), the finite is whatever is no form of the idea and is discussed prior to “The Idea” section—the mechanical, chemical, and “external purposiveness.” “Finite things are finite,” again, because they lack concepts with explanatory import of their own (WL 6:465/672). Second (§9.2), it turns out that the infinite is the absolute idea, realized as spirit in the logical sense, as anticipated early on:

At the mention of the infinite, soul and spirit *light up*, for in the infinite the spirit *is* at home. . . . [I]t rises to itself, to the light of its thinking, its universality, its freedom. (WL 5:150/109)¹⁸

This is the feature that allows explanation of diversity out of unity, so spirit is “infinitely richer than nature,” in that it is “unity *in the concept* of opposites” (WL 6:488/690). The result allows us to understand the sense in which the infinite is both *prior to* and yet *mediated* by the finite: the infinite is prior in being self-affirming, or for itself and so free; it is mediated in the sense of dependence on an indifferent substrate. The point about the finite is not the parallel: it is not finite insofar as it is supposed to depend on the infinite in that same respect; rather, the finite is such as to generate contradictions it cannot resolve, forcing any inquiry out of itself, away from the finite and into the infinite.

¹⁸ Following Pippin (1989, 198) on this passage.

10.4 The End: Method, Necessity, and Absolute Knowledge

We have now gathered the resources required to make sense of the last piece of the conclusion of the *Logic* not yet analyzed: the turn in “The Absolute Idea” chapter to discussion of *method* (WL 6:550/736ff.). This can seem to suggest that Hegel’s project was from the beginning focused on something like a meta-level reflection rather than more object-level delineation of what is prior in being a complete form of reason.¹⁹ But we can now see why the discussion of method is shaped by and completes the latter project in the metaphysics of reason.

To begin with, Kant’s Dialectic is (Hegel says again) right about a great deal:

It must be regarded as an infinitely important step that dialectic is once more being recognized as necessary to reason, although the result that must be drawn from it is the opposite than Kant drew. (WL 6:558/741–42)

To reverse Kant’s response to necessary contradiction is to recognize that “[t]he fundamental prejudice here is that dialectic has *only a negative result*” (WL 6:559/743). The positive conclusion drawn here is that the absolute idea is for itself, in a sense that will make it explain differentiation out of its unified concept (EL §237). And lecture notes here add that part of the significance of the method of the *Logic*, discussed at this point, is that *everything* that is not a form of the idea is to be understood by analogy with it, or as an image of it, sufficient to drive inquiry toward it:

Each of the stages considered up to this point is an image of the absolute, albeit in a limited manner at first, and so it drives itself on to the whole, the unfolding of which is precisely what we have designated the method. (EL §237Z)

¹⁹ Pippin, addressing these passages at the end, focuses on the “metalevel” claims here, recognizing that Hegel also has “object-level” ambitions at the conclusion of the *Logic*, but arguing that these are not “playing any significant role in the position defended by the PhG and the *Logic*” (1989, 247). I think that his general approach to Hegel, focused on the extension of a Kantian transcendental deduction of the conditions of the possibility of cognition of objects generally, makes this the best approach for him to take to the conclusion of the *Logic*. But I think it an advantage of my approach to the *Logic* that it need not rest on a dualism between meta- and object-levels and a limitation of the argument to the former.

This conclusion of the *Logic* gives the epistemological side of this view a striking formulation in claiming that “the method” discussed here is that of theoretical inquiry generally, on any domain. So Hegel’s view is, in this respect, a form of *epistemological* monism. The point here is this: In pursuing theoretical inquiry on some domain we are seeking the rational or the absolute idea there. We can reach explanatory satisfaction to different degrees on different domains. But whatever satisfaction we reach will be only in finding the absolute idea there, or else an approximation or an image of it. For example, to travel as far as natural scientific discovery of the system of laws and kinds is thus to take *one* step in a process that, if carried farther through, would naturally become what initially seems a different method: finding in this a contradiction which helps to formulate a better account of the absolute, and on towards the absolute idea in the form of spirit in the logical sense. So even the natural sciences, if unknowingly, pursue *partially* a method that, in completion, would become the *Logic*—would conclude with a reasoner recognizing its thinking as a complete form of reason in the world, and the “truth” of everything considering along that route. This is not to say that the natural sciences, as such, somehow should or must go farther; physics, for example, can demonstrate knowledge of the laws of physics without any such need. But physics still raises questions in this way which also require philosophical consideration. Further pursuit would demonstrate a sense in which those laws of physics are an incomplete form of reason, leaving them untrue, in Hegel’s sense, even if the physicists’ theories are perfectly correct; the laws have their truth only in “the idea.” Thus, the philosophical method is

soul and substance, and nothing is conceived and known in its truth unless *completely subjugated to the method*; it is the method proper to each and every fact. . . . It is therefore not only the highest *force* of reason, or rather its *sole* and absolute *force*, but also reason’s highest and sole *impulse* to find and recognize *itself through itself in all things*. (WL 6:551–52/737)

It is easy to see why this conclusion is supposed to fulfill the promise of the beginning: Hegel has mediated by argument an initially immediate or simple commitment to the reality and knowability of the absolute form of reason in the world. Or:

By virtue of the nature of the method just indicated, the science presents itself as a *circle* that winds around itself, where the mediation winds the end back to the beginning. (WL 6:571/751)

The point crucially concerns *epistemic* necessity: the beginning is not supposed to be arbitrary, but a standpoint necessary for philosophy as a form of theoretical inquiry; and Hegel argues that thinking through this beginning must lead through contradictions to their resolution with the absolute idea. We could think of this as something like an *a priori* status: it does not matter whether your particular experiences might lead you to wonder why the planets rotate, or plants grow, or anything else; any concern with the why of things should generate philosophical inquiry, which (Hegel is arguing) must come to the same conclusions.

Progress is not just supposed to verify the beginning, but allows ever better and more determinate comprehension of what was at first only the simplest commitment to the reality of the absolute. The contrast would be a procedure that claimed there must be something absolute, and in response to difficulties comprehending this would simply assert its existence as something higher, transcending our comprehension. This abstract negation would, again, result in an empty or indeterminate conception of the absolute:

The impatience that would *merely* transcend the *determinate* . . . in order that one would find oneself immediately in the absolute, has nothing before it as cognition but the empty negative, the abstract infinite. Or what it has before it is a *presumed* absolute, presumed because not *posited*, not *comprehended*; comprehended it will be only through the *mediation* of cognition. (WL 6:571/751)

And our study has fleshed out this claim to a great degree: How do we comprehend completeness of reason? By seeing the contradictions arising from its lack, as with the lawful, we learn both what determinate features are missing—a concept with explanatory import all its own—and also why the incomplete explicability of the lawful renders it an indifferent substrate, rather than any impediment to the completeness of what rests on it. In looking at the idea as life we do not just insist on such greater completeness, but comprehend its possibility. In looking at the limitations of the idea as life, we get a determinate sense of what more is required for the absolute idea. Similarly, we can understand the abstract negation as tempting but unfulfilling: for example, we can recognize the temptation to posit further grounds for the lawful, while recognizing that these would be empty of any potential to ground anything.

It is in these terms that we can understand Hegel's claim here that any competing philosophical system denying his conclusions should be able to be pushed by the same method back in Hegel's direction. Hegel himself is supposed to begin only with what is necessary for any theoretical inquiry. Imagine a competitor taking on board something antithetical to Hegel's position—for

example, a claim that our knowledge is limited or restricted. But this will be to add something to any necessary commitments in any theoretical inquiry. So, with respect to Hegel's method,

[w]hatever might be adduced against it—about the limitations of human cognition; about the need to reflect critically on the instrument of cognition before getting to the fact itself—all these are themselves *presuppositions, concrete determinations* that as such carry with them the demand for mediation and grounding. . . . [T]hey formally have no advantage. (WL 6:570/751)

Such an alternative cannot really do without an absolute, because it too must take theoretical inquiry (as in its own case) to be possible, and so the end of theoretical inquiry to be real and knowable. Hegel then anticipates catching the alternative view in contradictions: it must maintain the reality and knowability of the absolute, even while holding that we can only know what is finite. So it “makes into something incontestable and absolute what is known to be finite and untrue” (WL 6:570/751). And from the contradictions, Hegel anticipates forcing alternatives in his own direction.²⁰

It is worth noting the connection between this last idea and Hegel's response to ancient skeptical worries. Some interpreters would read Hegel's project as fundamentally addressed to refuting ancient skeptical worries, such as the concern that any form of reasoning requires some beginning claim, which the skeptical can then with equal right deny. To read Hegel as engaged in such a fundamentally epistemological project will have to mean finding in him an extremely ambitious epistemological claim, such as a claim to have considered *every possible view*, showing how all of them are insufficient in a manner that supports Hegel's alternative. It is easy to see why some readers find such attempted refutations of ancient skepticism to be philosophically unconvincing.²¹ But this seems to me beside the point, because I do not think that this is the basic aim of Hegel's project. Granted, he does stress the ancient problem (e.g., WL 5:65/45). And he is happy to use it against others, such as empiricists. But the point there is that empiricism *itself* argues by taking skeptical problems as prior, and as reason to eliminate elements of metaphysics. Hegel can respond that this kind of argument should be forced to take its own skepticism more seriously, in the ancient manner, thus undercutting empiricism too (EL §39R). This response does not require Hegel to make *his own*

²⁰ Compare the different account in Houlgate (2006, 35ff.).

²¹ See, e.g., Forster (1989, 34 and 128ff.) and Franks (2005, 8–10) on German Idealists generally as answering ancient epistemological skepticism with monism; for the response noted here see, e.g., Ameriks (1992, 192–93) on Forster.

project the refutation of all such skepticism, since he does not aim to use skepticism for such eliminativist ends.

What Hegel does is rather to take the metaphysics of reason as fundamental, so that this shapes in a more specific manner the epistemological problems he will face. This does not require him to directly confront any general form of skepticism—whether dreaming skepticism, or ancient skepticism—or any such problem that can be formulated without considering problems specifically about reason and its completeness. The result is that he need not argue that he has considered every possible alternative *view* or *position*. He need only argue that any alternative *philosophical project* or *line of thought* must, knowingly or not, take theoretical inquiry to be possible (at least in its own case), and so include commitments that will play into Hegel's hands. In a sense, then, Hegel can and does elsewhere admit a sense in which he cannot refute an ancient skepticism. In particular, if an individual can find in ancient skepticism a way to be skeptical *without engaging in any theoretical inquiry*, then "he cannot be convinced." "But," Hegel adds, "*thinking* skepticism is quite different." The skeptic who pursues thinking, theoretical inquiry can certainly try to argue for skepticism. He can uncover contradictions which undercut "the thought of the ordinary understanding which makes determinate differences appear to be ultimate and existent." But the crucial issue is, once again, the response to contradiction. And we have seen Hegel's argument against any project that would "remain at the result as negative" (VGP 19:359–60/2:329–30), instead of proceeding to Hegel's more optimistic conclusions. So any thinking or reasoning skepticism could again be argued in Hegel's direction. But this is not, and does not require, a claim to refute any conceivable skeptical *position*.

Finally, it should now be easy to understand the sense in which the overall point of the last chapter of the *Logic* is to establish the possibility of a kind of "absolute knowledge." The point is that there is no in-principle limit to our access to explanatory knowledge. So the view is not that we can know every fact, or all this at once, least of all by just reading the *Logic* or any kind of philosophy.²² We can through reading the *Logic* gain knowledge allowing complete explanation of itself—of the concept of spirit, in the logical sense involving thinking through the *Logic* to itself, which realizes the absolute idea; this is knowledge of "the *concept that comprehends itself conceptually*" (WL 6:572/752). And in all other cases, including the rotation of matter in the solar system and the growth of living beings, we can justify the conclusion that there is no in principle restriction of our access to explanatory knowledge. This is not to say that reading the *Logic* itself provides all possible explanatory

²² Cf. "it is quite improper" to try to "deduce" the "contingent products of nature" (EN §250R).

knowledge of everything; it rather shows that there is no limit in any case. And it shows that these other cases, although they fall short of the absolute, also generate contradictions that connect it all back up with the absolute and the case of spirit. This need not include a supposed explanation for anything like a complete reason for the location and features of every material particle in the universe. Nor need it include any case of explanatory knowledge traversing an infinite regress to a supposed ground beyond the regress. For Hegel denies that there is always complete explanation for everything. So he need not appeal to anything like Leibniz's idea that "there is always, underneath, a reason . . . even if it is perfectly understood only by God, who alone goes through an infinite series in one act of the mind."²³ Hegel denies any such epistemic barriers. *Whatever* follows and comprehends the path of the *Logic* would know itself as a complete form of reason, so that at the end "the *logical science* has apprehended its own concept" (WL 6:572/752). Whatever that is, is spirit in the logical sense. Thus, Hegel says, where he earlier glosses the point to be made in the last chapter of the *Logic*:

spirit recognizes the idea as its *absolute truth* . . . the infinite idea . . .
which is the absolute knowledge of itself. (WL 6:469/675)²⁴

10.5 Comparative Summary: Spinoza's God and Kantian Epistemology

I have tried throughout to meet the goals, defined in the Introduction (§0.6), of reading Hegel in light of the arguments, and how they cohere into one project. And Hegel's own arguments cannot (I have argued) support any form (monist or otherwise) of metaphysical foundationalism; but they do support Hegel's own very different conclusions. As Hegel says, in criticizing Spinoza, the "absolute cannot be a first, an immediate. Essentially the absolute is rather its result."²⁵ To be sure, Hegel's metaphysics is in many ways anti-atomist; he advocates different forms of metaphysical holism, from the insubstantial holism of the lawful to the substantial holism of the teleological. But the only

²³ Leibniz (1989, 303).

²⁴ Compare Pippin's epistemic reading of the absoluteness of spirit's self-knowledge: "it is a self-knowledge on which the very possibility of knowledge of objects depends" (1989, 100). I agree that there is such a kind of epistemological priority here, but have argued that understanding it requires seeing it in context of the claim for a specific kind of metaphysical priority of spirit.

²⁵ WL 6:196/473. Also: "The insight that absolute truth must be a result, and conversely, that a result presupposes a first truth" (WL 5: 69/48). Cf. "Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*" (PhG §20), and "the last is the first" (VPR 17:234/3:84).

monism supported by Hegel's arguments is an epistemological form, which is designed to answer a specific and unusual epistemological problem raised by the metaphysical issues Hegel takes as fundamental, concerning reason and its completeness.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the resulting account of Hegel's absolute idea is to note four points of comparison with the sort of metaphysical monism commonly associated with Spinoza:

First of all, Hegel argues that there is something that is a complete form of reason, or a complete explainer. If this is what Spinoza means by the requirement that substance be something "conceived through itself" (E1D3),²⁶ then Hegel's account is similar on that score. But Spinoza certainly seems to require that "[w]hatever is, is in God" (E1P15) and so dependent on God in this sense, where God or substance is "in itself" and so depends only on itself. This feature of Spinoza's view fits my use of the term "metaphysical foundationalism" here (although there might be other uses on which it would not). And Hegel has argued that we can make sense of a complete form of reason only by rejecting foundationalism (in that sense)—only by recognizing completeness of reason to be a process in something else. To instead try to make complete reason into a foundational reason for completely everything is to lapse into a confusion between substrata and reasons. The end (something dependent) is first (in metaphysical priority).

Second, Spinoza is a rationalist in the sense of accepting the principle of sufficient reason, to which he appeals in arguing for the existence of God or substance (E1P11D2). Hegel is sometimes said to accept the principle²⁷—and is very often read as arguing from what amounts to the same principle, even if the name is omitted.²⁸ But there is a crucial sense in which Hegel's metaphysics is different than such rationalism: he recognizes the reality of much that lacks a complete reason or ground, or much that is incompletely explicable. That said, there is still a compelling sense in which Hegel's view might be said to be a close relative of rationalism: Hegel argues that things *truly are* or have *substance* to the *degree* of their completeness of reason or rationality, or their explicability.²⁹ But

²⁶ As would follow from Della Rocca's (2008, 5) reading of Spinoza's "conceived through" in terms of explanation.

²⁷ E.g., Della Rocca (2008, 288).

²⁸ E.g., Inwood (1983, 63–64).

²⁹ Cf. Stern's sense in which Hegel is rationalist (2009, chapter 3). And on Spinoza, cf. Della Rocca (2012b, 140), who at once recognizes a view similarly appealing to degrees of explicability as a "violation" of the PSR, while yet arguing that Spinoza's rationalism "can handle" such violations.

I think it would be better to recognize that complexity while still saying that Hegel rejects “rationalism,” because the most relevant sense for that term is fixed by Kant’s Dialectic argument, to which Hegel is responding; and Hegel’s view does not fit that pattern targeted by Kant there; in short, if Hegel is right, then we *cannot* in general infer from the existence of a conditioned *X* to the conclusion that there must be a complete or unconditioned reason for that *X*.³⁰

Third, Spinoza’s God or substance is metaphysically necessary: “its essence necessarily involves existence, or it pertains to its nature to exist” (E1P7D). Again there are ways in which one might compare Hegel’s absolute idea, insofar as it is supposed to be a sort of unity of concept and reality. And it is in virtue of the similarities that Hegel is compelled to rebuff Kant’s attack on ontological arguments of the existence of God, lest they cut against his absolute idea as well.³¹ But this is not to say that Hegel defends anything that would ordinarily be called an ontological argument. Nor that Hegel’s absolute idea is the God of the ontological argument. For Hegel clearly rejects the notion of arguing by finding a predicate of existence in a subject (e.g. EL §28), and he criticizes those rationalists who would extract from an initial definition of God or the absolute a conclusion about existence.³² And the dependence of Hegel’s absolute idea for its existence on an otherwise indifferent substrate—the sense in which the absolute idea is the end and not the beginning—deprives it of metaphysical necessity in that rationalist sense. *But* Hegel does defend a sense in which the existence of the absolute idea has a kind of *epistemic* necessity. More specifically, any philosophical project must be guided by reason’s concern with the absolute. And any attempt to reason to a conclusion denying the knowability and reality of the absolute is supposed to meet contradictions which would force it back in Hegel’s direction. So any possible thinking through of a successful and complete philosophical project is supposed to necessarily draw Hegel’s conclusion.

Fourth, Spinoza defends a metaphysical monism. True, Hegel’s absolute idea has metaphysical priority over everything. But Hegel does not hold that there *is* only one individual substance, with everything “in” it; nor does he hold that the absolute idea is a prior and all-encompassing whole on which everything real metaphysically depends.³³ But, yet again,

³⁰This is how I would also interpret Hegel’s discussion of the cosmological argument at VPR 17:412ff.

³¹E.g., WL 5:88ff./63ff. and WL 6:404/627.

³²Hegel frequently criticizes the geometrical method reliant on initial definitions; see for example WL 5:48/32, in part with reference to Spinoza; and again on Spinoza at WL 6:196/473.

³³That is, Hegel holds neither existence- nor priority-monism, in terms from Schaffer (2010).

Hegel's metaphysics does raise problems that lead his *epistemology* to shadow in some ways the metaphysics of monism. For there is a sense in which Hegel includes an epistemic claim about the dependence of the intelligibility of everything on its place within the whole. This is a kind of epistemological monism: we can satisfy our interest in intelligibility on a given domain only in so far as that domain fits into the whole which includes the absolute idea. Or, there is one *method* appropriate everywhere—the method that seeks the absolute, and finds at least a distant image, and if followed completely would lead to the absolute idea.

Despite the differences just noted, some may still wish to argue that Hegel advocates a version of Spinoza's rationalist monism. They might say that Hegel's praise of Spinoza, coupled with his criticism of Spinoza for failing to deduce any determinacy from his substance, indicates that Hegel seeks to borrow the rationalist monism while modifying the conception of substance so that the deduction of finite determinacy becomes possible. The most popular proposal is probably a teleological or organic version of rationalist monism.³⁴

But Hegel's praise and criticism allow another reading: Hegel praises Spinoza as trying to carry the metaphysics of reason all the way through, even if this leads to counterintuitive conclusions about the objects most familiar to us. These are commitments Hegel thinks essential for philosophy to begin correctly. But Hegel's criticism does not mean that he seeks to do better *precisely what he sees Spinoza as trying to do*. Rather, it is supposed to be an advantage of Hegel's *different* project that it can capture the generation or explanation of determinate difference by a metaphysical absolute—which, then, is no longer supposed to be an all-encompassing One, but rather the process of Hegel's absolute idea.

I should admit that there are passages in Hegel which are difficult for both sides in my dispute with Spinozist interpreters. Passages difficult for Spinozist interpretations include those concerning the weakness and contingency as limits of the explicability of nature, for example. As far as I can see, they will have to respond by attributing to Hegel a view like this: *judged from a partial perspective*, many things lack such a complete reason; *judged from a complete perspective*, everything has a single sufficient ground in one all-encompassing substance. Call this the "partial perspective" strategy.³⁵

³⁴ See the especially clear statement of the view in Beiser (2005, 90–94).

³⁵ One interesting version is Franks's: "a partial perspective located within the whole, or from the transcendental standpoint, the perspective from which alone the whole can be seen as a totality, with an absolute first principle" (2005, 334). Franks is glossing German Idealism generally, and his Hegel discussions focus more on early texts; but he argues that the monist goal includes Hegel's later work (371–79).

Passages difficult for my non-Spinozist approach will include Hegel's claims that the idea is all substance, truth, actuality. I have tried to deal with these passages by emphasizing how Hegel's metaphysical account of the priority of the absolute idea also leads him to *epistemological* conclusions that are parallel to Spinoza's monism. And that is how I would, in general, expect to deal with passages seeming to suggest metaphysical monism.

Note that both sides here deal with the seeming tensions in Hegel by interpreting one kind of claim as epistemological, and the other as metaphysical. Spinozist readers take Hegel's seemingly non-monist claims to be expressions of a partial perspective. I take the claims which seem like metaphysical monism to be expressions of epistemological monism. Here are two reasons why I prefer my approach over this competitor: First, the partial perspective strategy is inconsistent with Hegel's arguments that the idea must depend on its realization in *something that is not the idea* (not just something which appears not to be the idea when judged from an incomplete perspective), in part because teleology must depend on its realization in *something not teleological* (§8.3).³⁶ Second, I have argued that rationalist monism stands in tension with the epistemological optimism for which Hegel aims (§5.4). A rationalist must hold that there is a complete reason for the location, for example, of every particle of matter. A rationalist *Hegel* would have to optimistically hold that we can have knowledge of this complete explanation. But the *Logic*, to my knowledge, neither gives this explanation, nor explains how there could be one and how we could know it. Further, Hegel's commitments prevent him from appealing here to a breakthrough into a discrete and higher grasp of reality immediately and all at once. And his criticism of Spinoza prevents him from dealing with the problem by eliminating the reality of matter. On my reading this is not a problem: Hegel denies the metaphysics on which there is a complete explanation for everything.

Perhaps some readers would accept my arguments for the conclusion that Hegel is no *rationalist* monist, while attributing to Hegel a weaker kind of metaphysical monism, along these lines: there is a One; there are also finite things; the One is prior to the finite things, in that the latter depend on the former, without the reverse being true in the same respect; the finite things do not depend on the One in every respect, but are left incompletely determined, or without complete reasons.³⁷ I grant that we can imagine this kind of view, or

³⁶ Although he reads Hegel as a Spinozist, Beiser (2005, 76–79) also powerfully shows that the partial perspective strategy fails; specifically, one cannot get real contingency into one's metaphysics by holding that things look contingent when judged from a partial perspective. Beiser sees this as a dilemma for Hegel; I see it as a dilemma for Spinozist interpretations of Hegel.

³⁷ I thank Franz Knappik for pressing me on this point.

paint this kind of picture. But my view is that this picture does not cohere with Hegel's other commitments, and neither would any arguments for it.

With the respect to the picture itself, the main question concerns how to formulate the relations between the One and finite things. The finite things cannot be *parts* in the sense Spinoza rules out, lest the parts be prior (E1P12–13). They cannot be anything like attributes or modes “in” the One, because Hegel rules out this substrate model in his criticisms of the metaphysics of the understanding, including Spinoza under that heading. And they cannot be organic members or organs within a single One organism. For Hegel's arguments in defense of teleological life, at the conclusion of the *Logic*, are not compatible with such an organic monism. In particular, Hegel accepts Kant's challenge concerning natural teleology, without the deflationary response I have argued to be unconvincing (§3.2); and Hegel shows that the challenge can be met where there is a process, of the idea, connecting individuals and their concept. These Hegelian commitments do nothing to make room for any kind of monistic form of inner purposiveness, without the process connecting universal and particular individuals.³⁸

Further, arguments for the weaker monism will not be possible in any manner consistent with Hegel's commitments. Consider the options: Again, we cannot attribute to Hegel an argument claiming to find a predicate of existence in a subject, like the ontological argument in this respect; and Hegel criticizes the very idea of arguing from an initial definition of God or the absolute a conclusion about existence. Further, the very features needed to make such an ontological argument work would push beyond weaker monism to rationalist monism: one could try to claim that God must be the most powerful being that can be conceived, and that this requires conceiving God as existing; but then this would seem to require conceiving God without a limit as to what he determines, or a limit as to how much of a complete reason he provides for everything. Other potential forms of argument are going to tend to appeal to explanatory considerations, demanding the One as an explanation of or reason for something. But—and this point is central to Kant's Dialectic critique, and is applicable to monist metaphysics (§4.1)—such arguments, made in a principled manner, will require something like the premise that there must always be an explanation or reason. They will become like Spinoza's argument for his God, in this respect of appealing to a PSR. And that will clearly force them to Spinoza's strong or rationalist form of monism; they could not stop with a God or substance which determinates some things, but leaves others

³⁸ McTaggart recognizes this, but prefers monism and so criticizes Hegel: “the right answer ... would have been that ... [t]he whole universe ... forms one Teleological System. . . . But Hegel takes a different view. . . . Organisms are in relation to one another” (1910, 275–76).

without an explanation. And we have noted Hegel's argument that this kind of view will also end up eliminating finite determinacy: it can imagine a complete reason for everything only by imagining this to be a substrate, and because this will not provide reasons for any determinacy, the PSR will require eliminating determinacy.³⁹ Granted, *Hegel* defends a principled way of accepting such explanatory arguments in some cases, but without a rationalist PSR. But Hegel's approach to this problem, we have seen, undercuts the substrate model, and leads to conclusions that are no longer a form of metaphysical monism at all—even if they support different kinds of metaphysical holism.

Some will say that it is relevant to the question of whether or not Hegel is a metaphysical monist to ask whether Kant himself may have late in life, or even squarely in the middle of the critical period, toyed with the idea that rationalist monism might somehow be required to shore up his positive epistemological project in the *Transcendental Analytic*.⁴⁰ But, even if so, this is no reason to read Hegel as a metaphysical monist. For Hegel's project, we have seen, is not to try to extract metaphysical conclusions from the epistemological project of Kant's *Transcendental Analytic*. And nothing here would show how Hegel could build *from Kant's Dialectic argument* to rationalist monism. Indeed, we have seen that the *Dialectic*, and Hegel's use of it, lead in another direction.

Some will also think it important that Hegel shares many claims with other post-Kantians, arguing that these other post-Kantians are metaphysical monists. But I have argued that a similarity in some claims does not prove a similarity in philosophical projects; and considering the organizing focus of Hegel's project, in particular, shows it to aim at a contrasting metaphysics.

Spinozist interpreters might want to argue that my interpretation cannot do justice to Hegel's comparisons of his conclusions to an account of God.⁴¹ What Hegel has to say about religion is a complex matter in its own right, to which I cannot do justice here. One of many large topics beyond my reach here would be how Hegel compares his claim about spirit's absolute knowledge of itself to Aristotle's view of God as thought thinking itself, and how Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle clears the way for the comparison.⁴² But I would begin by noting

³⁹ In the contemporary terms provided in Schaffer (2010), this means that we can *imagine* a priority monism without an existence monism, but there are Hegelian reasons to worry that an *argument* for monism would force us to the latter.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Franks (2005, 64ff.) on Kant's *Opus Postumum*, the "Metaphysical Deduction" from the *Transcendental Analytic*, and the development of Kant's views in the 1780s. This material may be of other great importance, but it does not rebut the case here against reading Hegel's *Logic* as endorsing rationalist monism.

⁴¹ For example, WL 5:44/29; EL §50R.

⁴² For the comparison in the *Logic*, see EL §236R and VL 222/227ff. And see Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle in the VGP, especially 19:164–65/2:149–50. For a comparison of Hegel's interpretation at this point with the original, see Ferrarin (2004, 115ff.).

that, although Hegel sometimes says that his philosophy shares its *content* with religion, giving this content the *form* of philosophical thinking, he also holds that his philosophy will be unrecognizable from the point of view of “religious consciousness,” which will take it for anti-religious (e.g., EG §573R). And, in any case, my reading is on a par with the relevant metaphysical alternative here, insofar as any version of Spinoza’s God would *also* be radical in this respect and unlikely to be recognized from the perspective of “religious consciousness.” True, my Hegel denies the existence of any single metaphysical foundation, on which the universe metaphysically depends; perhaps many would expect that any account of “God” would have to be an account of such a foundation.⁴³ But my reading, as opposed to Spinozism, will preserve more of a metaphysical distinction between something absolute (the absolute idea, realized as spirit) and things that are neither absolute nor in some substance that is absolute (the lawful, for example); my Hegel need not eliminate either the absolute nor the non-absolute; some people may also expect that this would have to be a feature of any account of “God.” So while there is more to be said here, I do not see reason to expect that my interpretation must have decisively more difficulties on this score than does the prominent metaphysical alternative of a Spinozist interpretation.

A similar comparison would be possible with interpretations on which Hegel fundamentally pursues not the project described and rejected in Kant’s *Dialectic*, but a radicalized form of the positive project Kant himself pursues in the *Analytic* of the first *Critique*.⁴⁴ I do not argue that reading Hegel as a Kantian in this respect precludes the recognition that he makes metaphysical claims; for perhaps one might try to draw metaphysical conclusions from epistemological concerns in the *Transcendental Analytic*. But if we do get metaphysics in that way, Hegel would find this to be still trapped in the errors of pre-Kantian metaphysics, until it makes central an engagement not with the issues from Kant’s *Analytic* but the threatened conflicts in the *Dialectic*. And while we might get *some* metaphysics in that way, I have been arguing that it won’t be *Hegel’s* metaphysics. I agree that Hegel proposes, in part, a kind of epistemological idealism. But Hegel’s epistemological views have a more distinctive character insofar as they respond to issues raised and shaped specifically by taking metaphysical issues about reason as more fundamental—issues not from the *Analytic* but from the *Dialectic*. Nor do we find the conclusion of the *Logic* focused on claims about a set of conceptual conditions of the possibility

⁴³ Compare also Marcuse, who argues that Hegel’s account of the relation of the infinite and the finite is reacting “radically ... against all theological definitions” (1987, 60). And Ameriks (2000) on Hegel’s anticipation of later criticisms of religious orthodoxy, even those considering themselves anti-Hegelian.

⁴⁴ See again Pippin (1989, 7–8) and the discussion of the virtues of this account in chapter 1, note 7.

of all or any experience of *anything* whatever, conceptualization, or the like; we *different* degrees of completeness of reason, and the *priority* of the absolute idea.⁴⁵

We could compare as well yet other ways of understanding Hegel's project. For instance, many recent interpreters find in Hegel answers to this sort of question: how can we collectively impose norms on ourselves, even while denying that there is any transcendent foundation for such normativity?⁴⁶ This by itself is not necessarily inconsistent with the interpretation I have given. What would be inconsistent would be an account of Hegel's philosophical project on which he takes this question about norms as fundamental, and views everything else through that lens; We might call this a "social pragmatist" reading of Hegel's project. Note that this would be different than a fundamentally epistemological project focused on articulating epistemic conditions of the possibility of knowledge or cognition. For example, such an epistemological reading might argue that metaphysics and everything else is constrained by a set of basic epistemic conditions. But a proponent of a social pragmatist project would likely be skeptical of any attempt to settle on such a final, basic list of epistemic conditions of all cognition or knowledge. So the social pragmatist, in this sense, would not endorse this kind of epistemological argument against metaphysics. But then a natural question arises for such a social pragmatist reading: is Hegel's account of collective self-imposition of norms supposed to be *part* of a metaphysics of reason—a metaphysics of a self-determining substance—or is it rather an *alternative* to this, or something non-metaphysical? If the former, then the questions about norms would be important, but would be raised by more basic and unifying issues about reason in the world; this would not be a competitor to my interpretation, but a way of further spelling it out. If the latter, then this non-metaphysical pragmatist reading will likely not cohere with at least some of Hegel's claims—some of the claims we have considered from the *Logic*, for example.⁴⁷ So a non-metaphysical pragmatist reading will likely have to conclude that there is an internal fault-line between the Hegel who is a non-metaphysical pragmatist and a Hegel who fails to remain true to that project. But I have argued that we should try, if possible, to give a unified reading. And we can. For the concluding arguments of the *Logic* can be made sense of in light of a single, coherent philosophical program. And this is a program unified

⁴⁵ Hegel is not arguing in "Life," for example, that experiencing anything requires judging it in terms of inner purposiveness. I think this is why Pippin (1989, 247), on coming to this textual material, says that what it contributes to the overall argument concerns the "metalevel," and Hegel's apparent object level ambitions are separate. Another approach: Horstmann (1990, 47) reads Hegel as claiming not that everything is an organism, but that everything can be given an organological interpretation.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Pinkard's (2011, 105) expression of this issue.

⁴⁷ For one account of the promises but also limits of reading Hegel as an anti-metaphysical pragmatist, see Siep (2000, 19–23).

by the metaphysics of reason, within which there can be a natural home for distinctive subsidiary claims about epistemology, norms, and much else as well.

10.6 Philosophical Worries and Conclusions: Closure and Metaphysics

We can conclude with some worries about Hegel's project, and some tentative conclusions of broader philosophical importance.

With respect to worries, I have tried to answer many in specific cases above. Still, it can often seem that Hegel's overall project is itself, as a whole, the target of a great many mutually reinforcing philosophical worries, so that their cooperation suggests a fundamental failure somewhere, even in advance of determining precisely where. But I think that this is misleading. We can see why by considering the common concern that Hegel fails because he seeks a kind of "closure."

The specific closure worry with the most immediately apparent philosophical force, in my view, is Bubner's worry about "Hegel's own project of a comprehensive dialectical system." The project, Bubner says, aims to address this problem: "[a]fter the . . . collapse of the traditional metaphysics of the Schools, there is no longer any reliable foundation," so that "theoretical claims . . . must rather be legitimated in an entirely new way" (2003, 74–75). But as far as solving that problem, with a new form of legitimation, the "aspect of closure . . . remains . . . notoriously problematic" (83).

Note that this is a worry about epistemology: *reliable foundation, legitimation*, and so on. With regard to everything but Hegel, I think that the worry is convincing: Imagine successfully defending an epistemic foundation for all knowledge; there would, then, be nothing left to do, legitimation-wise—no further work for more confidence, if you already had certainty, and no broader extension if you could already found or ground all knowledge, and so on. Now imagine someone proposing to find in Hegel's *Logic* an argument that gives up epistemic foundations, and yet comes to a comparable final closure, with respect to the legitimation of all knowledge. It seems to me that Bubner is right to worry about any such proposal.

But I think that this is beside the point when it comes to *Hegel's* project in the *Logic*. For I have argued that it is better to understand this project in terms of very different, metaphysical issues, which cannot themselves be understood in such epistemic terms—not as a hankering for the kind of legitimation that would have been provided by an epistemic foundation, for example. True, Hegel does aim to replace *metaphysical* foundationalism. What Hegel's "absolute idea" must do, then, is not the work that would otherwise be done by an epistemological foundation, with respect to legitimation in response to

skeptical problems about all knowledge. What it must do is the work of Kant's ideas of the unconditioned: it must provide an account of a complete form of reason in the world, or something completely explicable. And it must do so in a way that supports a different epistemology—no longer a view, like Kant's, on which the completely explicable is utterly beyond our knowledge. This argument aims for a kind of closure of its circle, to be sure, but this is just to say that it begins by taking a position on the reality and knowability of the completely explicable, and aims to justify this position by argument. If the resulting conclusion does not have the features that would be provided by an epistemological foundationalism—perhaps infallibility, for example—then this is not necessarily relevant to the project. The relevant question in the neighborhood would be rather whether the metaphysical alternatives to Hegel can do significantly better with respect to the epistemology and skeptical worries; and I have tried to argue here that Hegel is in a strong position in this respect (especially in chapter 2).

So my response to this epistemological closure worry is that it misses the target of Hegel's project. A different response would be to try to find some strands of Hegel which defend a more open-ended view on epistemological issues. And so Bubner himself is more optimistic about the sense in which Hegel is supposed to "provide a conceptual model capable of grasping the historically conditioned character of our concepts" (2003, 83).⁴⁸ And perhaps there are indeed senses in which Hegel endorses kinds of openness in response to some questions. But we need not read Hegel's work as divided by an internal fault-line between a project of epistemological closure and a project of epistemological openness. For, again, we can find unity in the project by recognizing that it takes metaphysical issues as more fundamental.

Granted, it may be that, in putting his metaphysics to work in replacing the Transcendental Dialectic account of reason, Hegel involves himself in subsidiary epistemological difficulties. For example, some might well worry about Hegel's epistemological monism, claiming to articulate an aim of all forms of theoretical inquiry. But, first, it is important to compare relevant alternatives. Kant's alternative will be at least similar in orientation: reason guides all theoretical inquiry. A different alternative would be an embrace of the skeptical hopelessness that worries Kant; but it is unclear what kind of *project* could defend this, if it means a commitment to the hopelessness of all such theoretical projects. The other alternative that I can see would be deflationism about reason; but I have tried to argue that Kant has a strong case against

⁴⁸ Or perhaps the *Logic* is concerned at base with the conceptual conditions of the possibility of experience or conceptual schemes, but concludes that any list of such conditions must remain incomplete or unstable (Pippin 1989, 257).

this (especially in §4.2). Furthermore, it is also not in advance clear what the impact of difficulties in this subsidiary area would be on the core of *Logic* project: on the face of it, an account of the completeness of reason, or the absolute, and its in-principle knowability would remain; this might be so even if we must give up Hegel's own attempt to establish knowledge of actual existence, and its relevance to all forms of inquiry. Similarly, some closure worries will target claims about history in Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit*, discussed in §9.1. But the *Logic* does not rely on these claims, and so I set them aside here.

There are, to be sure, other seemingly-similar worries that are both worth considering and relevant to the core of the *Logic* project. But their philosophical force is not so clear in advance; and they are not mutually reinforcing worries, but very much at odds.

To begin with, some might worry about Hegel's project because they seek to defend epistemology-first criticisms of metaphysics, and then to show that Hegel's metaphysics violates the conditions that limit the possibility of our knowledge, cognition, or the like. I think that this attack would, first, have to respond to Hegel's swimming rejoinder (§§0.2 and 5.2). Second, it is important that this is not really a worry about closure. On the contrary, this worry would have to first come to closure with a specific account of the supposed final conditions of the possibility of all knowledge, if it is then to argue that Hegel's metaphysics violates those conditions.

Further, I think that we should definitely worry about rejoinders to Hegel that defend Kant's position in the Dialectic. Perhaps a Kantian could defend Kant's ways of conceiving of the unconditioned. Or, perhaps Kantians could jettison some of Kant's ways of conceiving the unconditioned—like those involving final subjects/substrata—and yet still argue that the best conception of the interest of reason will put this in-principle beyond reach of our knowledge. This might be compelling, but it is not compatible with deflationism, including the deflationism suggested by Bubner's epistemological worry about closure. That is, some will have this deflationary worry: philosophy should address a more modest topic than Hegel's; philosophy should, for example, aim to grasp the ways in which our concepts are historically conditioned. But any defense of Kant's Dialectic denial of knowledge would have to be a defense of *inflationism* about reason, arguing that theoretical inquiry always addresses a topic about which we must always lack knowledge—a topic along the lines of Kant's unconditioned. So a Kantian worry about Hegel's project is at odds with the kind of deflationary worry about closure above.

There is also a more radical worry about closure, which definitely would apply to the core of the *Logic* project. Note that Kant seeks a carefully balanced position on reason: theoretical philosophy can affirm reason's guidance, and defend it as guiding us to ever-better approximations of our theoretical

goals; but we cannot have the knowledge that reason ultimately seeks. Perhaps the balance is what allows Hegel to try to use Kant against himself, in trying to tip the balance away from the latter denial of knowledge.⁴⁹ But others could try to tip the balance the other way, as it were, into a more radically anti-Hegelian view. That is, one might try to argue that what is of most concern in philosophy is always something so far beyond the reach of reason that all attempts at drawing philosophical conclusions will always undercut themselves, and unwittingly reveal their own failures to reach closure. Hegel would see this as the view that philosophy must always strive for an inaccessible form of the infinite, and he would characterize this as the “bad infinite.” But perhaps the view could be defended against Hegel. Perhaps this would be an approach to defending some of Hegel’s contemporaries against his criticisms of them—perhaps an approach to Jacobi, or to Friedrich Schlegel; or perhaps it could be an approach to understanding later forms of anti-Hegelianism.⁵⁰ But any such attack must be sharply distinguished from any form of deflationism, including the above epistemic worries about closure. This attack is radically inflationary. It does not allege that Hegel should have retreated in the face of impossibility to something less ambitious concerning historical conditioning. It alleges that, in bringing his arguments to closure, Hegel was underestimating the extent of the difficulty of the real or correct concerns of philosophy, and should have more closely attended to how reason necessarily always fails relative to those even more inflationary concerns.

These worries about Hegel would be worth considering in greater detail than space allows here. But we can at least see that the most clearly convincing worry misses the target of Hegel’s project in the *Logic*, and that the other worries are not mutually reinforcing concerns about closure in any unitary sense.

And, worries aside, I think we can at least tentatively draw some philosophical conclusions from our consideration of Hegel’s *Logic*, and the parts of Kant to which it most fundamentally responds.

First, take the topic of epistemology-first criticisms of metaphysics: worries that metaphysics is illegitimate because it concerns objects that we can either not know, or perhaps not even coherently think about. Here I think we can learn a lasting lesson from Hegel’s engagement with Kant. For I have tried to bring out reasons from Hegel, and even from Kant himself, for thinking that this kind of worry, prominent though it may be, cannot be decisive on its own.

⁴⁹ See Hegel’s attempt to make Kant’s (and Jacobi’s) position look to have conflicting commitments about reason at (VPR 17:434/250).

⁵⁰ The most compelling case I know of here is Martin’s (2007) defense, which is wonderfully clear in distinguishing a defense of the bad infinite from the forms of deflationism with which it is often confused; he is defending Fichte, in particular.

It would have trouble justifying a non-question-begging conception of what “metaphysics” is, and the opponent would have no reason to accept an epistemological conception of metaphysics designed to make it look impossible. Further, such attacks turn on an implied contrast with something supposed to be superior to metaphysics—whether this is supposed to be natural science, or some form of epistemological reflection, or just whatever sort of project the skeptic about metaphysics is engaged in to justify his skepticism. But the supposedly superior project will generally end up being subject to the same skeptical considerations advanced against metaphysics. So this kind worry about metaphysics will have force, I conclude, only if it can gain some support of another attack, like that of Kant’s own Transcendental Dialectic. The latter can help because, first, it charitably fixes a conception of metaphysics, according to which this is always of direct and rational interest. And, second, because it does not try to attack metaphysics from some supposedly superior vantage point; it argues that metaphysics undercuts itself.

Second, this brings us to the question of how best to understand what metaphysics is. There are, to be sure, many ways in which we could answer. But looking at Kant and Hegel suggests that the best is the way Hegel draws from Kant’s Dialectic. What makes it best is that it offers us the balance of a single framework from which, remarkably, we can appreciate both the powerful appeal and interest of metaphysics, and yet also a criticism of metaphysics that is of surprising resilience and force. We can see the interest of metaphysics in that we generally do take a theoretical interest in the *why* of things, so that it would be natural to engage in the most direct and general questions about what explainers and complete explainers are or would have to be. But this very way of thinking also brings out the power of the Kant’s critique in the Transcendental Dialectic. And yet it also leaves open the possibility of a defense of metaphysics, like Hegel’s.

Third, there are further implications specifically for those who would still, like Kant, reject the possibility of metaphysics. In particular, I think that they should recognize the direct and rational interest of metaphysics, and not pretend to the indifference so effectively ridiculed by both Kant and Hegel; for the most powerful attacks will cede this as common ground, and then argue on that basis that metaphysics is impossible for us. Another conclusion for such skeptics is that, if they do argue on the basis of something like Kant’s Dialectic, then it is worth their while to anticipate the possibility that whatever claims they use to try to show metaphysics at odds with itself might be exploited to rebuild metaphysics, just as Hegel responds to Kant.

Fourth, there are also implications specifically for those who would, like Hegel, continue to pursue metaphysics. First, they should not fool themselves into thinking that metaphysics can be adequately defended simply by rejecting

all criticisms as concerning epistemology rather than metaphysics. For Kant shows that there are other and more powerful ways of bringing metaphysics into question. Further, Kant's Dialectic and Hegel's response will raise a basic question: Should metaphysics take the form of foundationalism? Foundationalists, I think, should be concerned that their views might founder on new antinomies, and should prepare for those kinds of worries. Anti-foundationalist metaphysicians will either need some way to resist Kant's case that claims about conditions are always ways of pursuing the unconditioned—that is, roughly translated into contemporary terms, that claims about metaphysical "grounding" are always in part concerned with metaphysical "fundamentality." Or they will need some way, with Hegel, of providing a metaphysical absolute but without foundationalism.

In any case, we should not retreat into debates in which neither side can engage with the other, because both proceed on the basis of an unquestioned metaphilosophical assumption that the other simply has everything wrong. We should not take as fundamental any kind of guiding narrative on which metaphysics is simply outdated. Nor should we assume from the beginning that all worries about metaphysics have been misguided. For looking to Hegel's response to Kant reveals that there is a single framework within which we can appreciate the relevance of both critiques and defenses of metaphysics. And this is a case in which attention to the history of philosophy can help us to gain a broader and better understanding of the underlying philosophical terrain, on which we are still debating today—and a renewed sense of some unfamiliar but promising paths across that terrain.

WORKS CITED

- Al-Azm, S. 1972. *The Origins of Kant's Argument in the Antinomies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Allison, H. E. 1991. "Kant's Antinomy of Teleological Judgment". *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 30(Supplement): 25–42.
- Allison, H. E. 2004. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ameriks, K. 1985. "Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46(1): 1–35.
- Ameriks, K. 1991. "Hegel and Idealism." *The Monist* 74(3): 386–402.
- Ameriks, K. 1992. "Recent Work on Hegel: The Rehabilitation of an Epistemologist?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52(1): 177–202.
- Ameriks, K. 2000. "The Legacy of Idealism in the Philosophy of Feuerbach, Marx, and Kierkegaard." In *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, edited by K. Ameriks, 258–81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aristophanes. 1993. *Clouds*. Translated by Jeffery Henderson. Newbury: Focus Classical Library.
- Aristotle. 1984. *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by J. Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Armstrong, D. M. 1983. *What Is a Law of Nature?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Armstrong, D. M. 1993. *A Materialist Theory of the Mind*. London: Routledge.
- Bartuschat, W. 2007. "Nur hinein, nicht heraus. Hegel über Spinoza." In *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*, edited by D. H. Heidemann and C. Krijnen, 101–15. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Baum, M. 1986. *Die Entstehung der Hegelschen Dialektik*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Baum, M. 1990. "Kants Prinzip der Zweckmäßigkeit und Hegels Realisierung des Begriffs." In *Hegel und die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, edited by H. F. Fulda and R. P. Horstmann, 139–57. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Beebe, H. 2000. "The Non-Governing Conception of Laws of Nature." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 81: 571–94.
- Beiser, F. C. 1993. "Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, edited by F. C. Beiser, 1–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beiser, F. C. 1995. "Hegel, a non-metaphysician? A Polemic." *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 32: 1–13.
- Beiser, F. C. 2003. "Two Concepts of Reason in German Idealism." *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus/International Yearbook of German Idealism* 1: 15–27.
- Beiser, F. C. 2005. *Hegel*. New York: Routledge.
- Blackburn, S. 1990. "Filling in Space." *Analysis* 50: 62–65.
- Bogdandy, A. 1989. *Hegels Theorie des Gesetzes*. Freiburg: Alber Verlag.

- Boyle, R. 1991. *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*. Edited by M. A. Stewart. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Brandom, R. 2001. "Holism and Idealism in Hegel's *Phenomenology*." *Hegel Studien* 36: 57–92.
- Brandom, R. 2002. *Tales of the Mighty Dead*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bristow, W. F. 2002. "Are Kant's Categories Subjective?" *Review of Metaphysics* 60: 551–80.
- Bubner, R. 2003. "Hegel's *Science of Logic*: The Completion or Sublation of Metaphysics?" In *The Innovations of Idealism*, 60–83. Translated by Nicholas Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buchdahl, G. 1973. "Hegel's Philosophy of Nature and the Structure of Science" *Ratio* 15: 1–27.
- Buller, D. J. 1998. "Etiological Theories of Function: A Geographical Survey." *Biology and Philosophy* 13: 505–27.
- Chalmers, A. 1993. "So the Laws of Physics Needn't Lie." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 71(2): 196–205.
- Chalmers, D. 1996. *The Conscious Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cummins, R. 1975. "Functional Analysis." *Journal of Philosophy* 72: 741–65.
- Curley, E. 1969. *Spinoza's Metaphysics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- de Boer, K. 2010a. "Hegel's Account of Contradiction in the Science of Logic Reconsidered." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48(3): 345–73.
- de Boer, K. 2010b. *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Della Rocca, M. 2008. *Spinoza*. London: Routledge.
- Della Rocca, M. 2010. "PSR," *Philosopher's Imprint* 10/7.
- Della Rocca, M. 2012a. "Rationalism, Idealism, Monism, and Beyond." In *Spinoza and German Idealism*, edited by Eckart Förster and Yitzhak Y. Melamed, 7–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Della Rocca, M. 2012b. "Violations of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (in Leibniz and Spinoza)." In *Metaphysical Grounding*, edited by F. Correia and B. Schnieder, 139–64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- DePaul, M. R. 2001. "Value Monism in Epistemology." In *Knowledge, Truth, and Duty*, edited by M. Steup, 170–83. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Descartes, R. 1984. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. 3 vols. Translated and edited by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, D. Murdoch, and (for vol. 3) A. Kenny. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Descartes, R. 2000. *Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*. Edited by R. Ariew. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- DeVries, W. 1988. *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- DeVries, W. 1991. "The Dialectic of Teleology." *Philosophical Topics* 19: 51–70.
- Düsing, K. 1976. *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*. *Hegel-Studien* supp. 15, Bonn: Bouvier.
- Düsing, K. 1983. "Constitution and Structure of Self-Identity: Kant's Theory of Apperception and Hegel's Criticism." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 8: 409–31.
- Düsing, K. 1986a. "Ästhetische Einbildungskraft und intuitiver Verstand. Kants Lehre und Hegels spekulativ-idealistische Umdeutung." *Hegel-Studien* 21: 87–128.
- Düsing, K. 1986b. "Die Idee des Lebens in Hegels Logik." In *Hegels Philosophie der Natur*. Hrsg. von R.-P. Horstmann und M.J. Petry. Stuttgart, 276–89.
- Ferrarin, A. 2001. *Hegel and Aristotle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Förster, E. 2002. "Die Bedeutung von §§76, 77 der Kritik der Urteilskraft für die Entwicklung der nachkantischen Philosophie, Teil 1." *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 156–90.
- Förster, E. 2012. *The Twenty-five Years of Philosophy*. Translated by B. Bowman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Forster, M. 1989. *Hegel and Skepticism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Forster, M. 1998. *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Franks, P. 2005. *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Furth, M. 1967. "Monadology." *Philosophical Review* 76: 169–200.
- Gadamer, H. G. 1964. "Die Verkehrte Welt." *Hegel-Studien* supp. 3: 135–54.

- Garber, D. 2001. *Descartes Embodied: Reading Cartesian Philosophy through Cartesian Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ginsborg, H. 2001. "Kant on Understanding Organisms as Natural Purposes." In *Kant and the Sciences*, edited by E. Watkins, 231–58. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ginsborg, H. 2005. "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology," last modified February 3, 2013. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics>.
- Gram, M. S. 1981. "Intellectual Intuition: The Continuity Thesis." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42: 287–304.
- Grier, M. 2001. *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gueroult, M. 1978. "Hegels Urteil über die Antithetik der reinen Vernunft." In *Seminar: Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, edited by R. P. Horstmann. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Guyer, P. 1990. "Reason and Reflective Judgment: Kant on the Significance of Systematicity." *Nous* 24: 17–43.
- Guyer, P. 1993. "Thought and Being: Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, edited by F. Beiser, 171–210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guyer, P. 2001. "Organisms and the Unity of Science." In *Kant and the Sciences*, edited by E. Watkins, 259–81. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Habermas, J. 1987. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*. Translated by F. G. Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hoffman, P. 2009. "Does Efficient Causation Presuppose Final Causation? Aquinas vs. Early Modern Mechanism." In *Metaphysics and the Good*, edited by S. Newlands and L. M. Jorgensen, 295–312. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Horstmann, R. P. 1984. *Ontologie und Relationen*. Königstein: Athenaum/Hain.
- Horstmann, R. P. 1990. *Wahrheit aus dem Begriff. Eine Einführung in Hegel*. Frankfurt am Main: Hain.
- Horstmann, R. P. 1991. *Die Grenzen der Vernunft. Eine Untersuchung zu Zielen und Motiven des Deutschen Idealismus*. Frankfurt: Anton Hain.
- Horstmann, R. P. 1993. "Metaphysikkritik bei Hegel und Nietzsche." *Hegel-Studien* 28: 285–301.
- Horstmann, R. P. 2006. "Hegels Ordnung der Dinge. Die *Phänomenologie des Geistes* als 'transzendentalistisches' Argument für eine monistische Ontologie und seine erkenntnistheoretischen Implikationen." *Hegel-Studien* 41: 9–50.
- Houlgate, S. 1999. "Hegel's Critique of Foundationalism in the 'Doctrine of Essence.'" *German Philosophy since Kant*, Supplement 44: 24–45.
- Houlgate, S. 2006. *The Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.
- Hume, D. 1975a. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. 2nd ed. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge. Revised by P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hume, D. 1975b. *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*. 3rd ed. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge. Revised by P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hutchison, K. 1991. "Dormitive Virtues, Scholastic Qualities, and the New Philosophies." *History of Science* 29: 245–78.
- Iltig, K. H. 1987. "Hegels Philosophie des Organischen." In *Hegel und die Naturwissenschaften*, edited by M. J. Petry, 349–76. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.
- Inwood, M. 1983. *Hegel*. London: Routledge.
- Kim, J. 1994. "Explanatory Knowledge and Metaphysical Dependence." *Philosophical Issues* 5: 51–69.
- Kitcher, P. 1986. "Projecting the Order of Nature." In *Kant's Philosophy of Physical Science*, edited by R. E. Butts, 201–35. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Kreines, J. 2001. "Hegel on Mind, Action and Social Life: The Theory of Geist as a Theory of Explanation." Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago.
- Kreines, J. 2004. "Hegel's Critique of Pure Mechanism and the Philosophical Appeal of the Logic Project." *European Journal of Philosophy* 12(1): 38–74.

- Kreines, J. 2005. "The Inexplicability of Kant's *Naturzweck*: Kant on Teleology, Explanation and Biology." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 87(3): 270–311.
- Kreines, J. 2007. "Between the Bounds of Experience and Divine Intuition: Kant's Epistemic Limits and Hegel's Ambitions." *Inquiry* 50(3): 306–34.
- Kreines, J. 2008a. "Hegel: Metaphysics without Pre-Critical Monism." *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 57: 48–70.
- Kreines, J. 2008b. "The Logic of Life: Hegel's Philosophical Defense of Teleological Explanation in Biology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by F. Beiser, 344–77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kreines, J. 2009. "Kant on the Laws of Nature: Laws, Necessitation, and the Limitation of Our Knowledge." *European Journal of Philosophy* 17(4): 527–58.
- Kreines, J. 2012. "Learning from Hegel What Philosophy Is All About: For the Metaphysics of Reason; Against the Priority of Meaning." *Verifiche: Rivista di Scienze Umane* 41 (1–3): 129–73.
- Kreines, J. 2013. "Kant and Hegel on Teleology and Life from the Perspective of Debates about Free Will." In *The Freedom Of Life: Hegelian Perspectives*, edited by T. Khurana, 111–54. Cologne: Walther König.
- Kreines, J. Unpublished manuscript. "Kant on Unknowable Things in Themselves: A Neglected Path through the Minefield."
- Langton, R. 1998. *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leibniz, G.W. 1989. *Philosophical Essays*. Translated and edited by R. Ariew and D. Garber. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Lewis, D. K. 1986. *Philosophical Papers*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, D. K. 1999. *Papers in Metaphysics and Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Locke, J. 1997. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by R. Woolhouse. London: Penguin.
- Loewer, B. 1996. "Humean Supervenience." *Philosophical Topics* 24: 101–26.
- Longuenesse, B. 2000. "Point of View of Man or Knowledge of God." In *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel*, edited by Sally Sedgwick, 253–82. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Longuenesse, B. 2007. *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lumsden, S. 2008. "The Rise of the Non-Metaphysical Hegel." *Philosophy Compass* 3(1): 51–65.
- MacFarland, J. D. 1970. *Kant's Concept of Teleology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Marcuse, H. 1987. *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*. Translated by S. Benhabib. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- McCumber, J. 2013. *Understanding Hegel's Mature Critique of Kant*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- McLaughlin, P. 1990. *Kant's Critique of Teleology in Biological Explanation*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- McTaggart, J. 1896. *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McTaggart, J. 1910. *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Millikan, R. G. 1993. *White Queen Psychology and Other Essays for Alice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Molnar, G. 2003. *Powers: A Study in Metaphysics*. Edited by S. Mumford. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neander, K. 1991a. "Functions as Selected Effects." *Philosophy of Science* 58: 168–84.
- Neander, K. 1991b. "The Teleological Notion of 'Function'." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 69(4): 454–68.
- Newlands, S. 2011. "Hegel's Idealist Reading of Spinoza." *Philosophy Compass* 6 (2): 100–108.
- Newton, I. 2004. *Philosophical Writings*. Edited by A. Janiak. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ott, W. R. 2009. *Causation and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Pinkard, T. 1988. *Hegel's Dialectic: The Explanation of Possibility*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Pinkard, T. 2000. *Hegel: A Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pinkard, T. 2011. "Spirit as the 'Unconditioned'." In *A Companion to Hegel*, edited by S. Houlgate and M. Bauer, 91–107. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pinkard, T. 2012. *Hegel's Naturalism: Mind, Nature, and the Final Ends of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pinkard, T. 2013. "Hegel and Marx: Ethics and Practice." In *Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, edited by Roger Crisp, 505–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pippin, R. 1989. *Hegel's Idealism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pippin, R. 1991. *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pippin, R. 1993. "'You Can't Get There From Here': Transition Problems in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, edited by F. C. Beiser, 52–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pippin, R. 2002. "Leaving Nature Behind: Or Two Cheers for Subjectivism." In *Reading McDowell: On Mind and World*, edited by N. H. Smith, 59–71. New York: Routledge.
- Priest, G. 1995. *Beyond the Limits of Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Proops, I. 2010. "Kant's First Paralogism." *Philosophical Review* 119(4): 449–95.
- Quante, M. 1997. "Personal Autonomy and the Structure of the Will." In *Right, Morality, Ethical Life—Studies in G. W. F. Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, edited by J. Kotkavirta, 45–74. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.
- Railton, P. 1989. "Explanation and Metaphysical Controversy." *Scientific Explanation* 13: 220–52.
- Redding, P. 1996. *Hegel's Hermeneutics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Redding, P. 1997. "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel," last modified July 22, 2010. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel>.
- Redding, P. 2007. *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richardson, J. Unpublished manuscript. "Aristotle's Teleologies."
- Rohlf, M. 2010. "The Ideas of Pure Reason." In *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, edited by P. Guyer, 190–209. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosefeldt, T. 2003. "Kant's Self: Real Entity and Logical Identity." In *Strawson and Kant*, edited by H. J. Glock, 141–54. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosen, M. 1982. *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, B. 1927. *The Analysis of Matter*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Schaffer, J. 2003. "Is There a Fundamental Level?" *Noûs* 37: 498–517.
- Rutherford, D. 1990. "Phenomenalism and the Reality of Body in Leibniz's Later Philosophy." *Studia Leibnitiana* 22: 11–28.
- Schaffer, J. 2003. "Is There a Fundamental Level?" *Nous* 37.3: 498–517.
- Schaffer, J. 2008. "Causation and Laws of Nature: Reductionism." In *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, edited by J. Hawthorne, T. Sider, and D. W. Zimmerman, 82–107. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Schaffer, J. 2009. "On What Grounds What." In *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology*, edited by D. Manley, D. Chalmers, and R. Wasserman, 347–83. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schaffer, J. 2010. "Monism: The Priority of the Whole." *Philosophical Review* 119(1): 31–76.
- Schelling, F. W. J. 2001a. "Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy 1802." Vater translation in *Philosophical Forum* 32:4, 373–97; cited by volume:page from *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–61.
- Schelling, F. W. J. 2001b. *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*. Vater translation in *Philosophical Forum* 32:4, 339–71; cited by volume:page from *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–61.
- Siep, L. 1974. "Der Kampf um Anerkennung. Zu Hegels Auseinandersetzung mit Hobbes in den Jenaer Schriften." *Hegel-Studien* 9: 155–207.

- Siep, L. 1991. "Hegel's Idea of a Conceptual Scheme. Review Discussion of R. Pippin, Hegel's Idealism." *Inquiry* 34: 63–76.
- Siep, L. 2000. *Der Weg der Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Sober, Elliot. 1984. *The Nature of Selection*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Spinoza, B. 1994. *A Spinoza Reader*. Translated and edited by E. Curley. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stern, R. 1990. *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object*. London: Routledge.
- Stern, R. 2009. *Hegelian Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Suchting, W. A. 1990. "Hegel and the Humean Problem of Induction." *Studies In History and Philosophy of Science* 21 (3):493–510.
- Theunissen, M. 1980. *Sein und Schein*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Thompson, M. 1995. "The Representation of Life." In *Virtues and Reasons: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory*, edited by R. Hursthouse, G. Lawrence, and W. Quinn, 247–96. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wallace, R. M. 1999. "How Hegel Reconciles Private Freedom with Citizenship." *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 7(4): 419–33.
- Wallace, R. M. 2005. *Hegel's Philosophy of Reality, Freedom and God*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walsh, W. H. 1975. *Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Warren, D. 2001. *Reality and Impenetrability in Kant's Philosophy of Nature*. London: Routledge.
- Westphal, K. R. 1989a. "Hegel's Attitude toward Jacobi in the 'Third Attitude of Thought toward Objectivity'." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 27: 135–56.
- Westphal, K. R. 1989b. *Hegel's Epistemological Realism*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Westphal, K. R. 2000. "Kant, Hegel, and the Fate of 'the' Intuitive Intellect." In *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy*, edited by S. Sedgwick, 283–305. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilson, J. 2005. "Supervenience-based Formulations of Physicalism." *Nous* 39(3): 426–59.
- Wilson, M. 1994. "On Leibniz's Explication of 'Necessary Truth'." In *Metaphysics and Its Foundations 1*, volume three of *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Critical Assessments*, edited by R. S. Woolhouse, 114–27. London: Routledge.
- Winkler, K. 1991. "The New Hume." *Philosophical Review* 100(4): 541–79.
- Wolff, M. 1992. *Das Körper-Seele-Problem: Kommentar zu Hegel, Enzyklopedie 1830*. §389. Frankfurt: Klostermann.
- Wood, A. 1990. *Hegel's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, L. 1976. *Teleological Explanations: An Etiological Analysis of Goals and Functions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Yovel, Y., 1992. *The Adventures of Immanence*, volume 2 of *Spinoza and Other Heretics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zanetti, V. 1993. "Die Antinomie der teleologischen Urteilskraft." *Kant-Studien* 84: 341–55.
- Zimmerman, D. 2004. "Prologue: Metaphysics after the Twentieth Century." *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* 1: 9–22.
- Zuckert, R. 2007. *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the Critique of Judgment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zumbach, C. 1984. *The Transcendent Science: Kant's Conception of Biological Methodology*. The Hague: Nijhoff.

INDEX

- the Absolute (Armstrong), 145–146. *See also*
 absolute idea (Hegel); absolute spirit (Hegel)
- absolute idea (Hegel)
 as a complete form of reason, 147–148, 219,
 230, 234–235, 237, 239, 243–244
 contradiction and, 26, 244, 250, 254–255, 258
 epistemology and, 26, 220–221, 235, 239–240,
 260, 267–268
 explanation and, 252–253, 257, 259
 freedom as imminent purpose and, 220,
 228–229, 239
 God and, 260
 the infinite and, 252
 intelligibility and, 235, 239
 in and for itself quality of, 229–231, 241,
 248, 253
 the lawful and, 234, 246–247
 life and, 229, 246
 metaphysical priority and, 25, 232, 235,
 239–240, 262
 natural sciences and, 254
 self-determination and, 230, 234
 Spinoza’s “One” contrasted with, 261
 spirit and, 25–26, 226, 244, 252,
 257–258, 265
 substance and, 231, 251
 thinking and, 244
- absolute spirit (Hegel), 225–226
- the actual (*das Wirkliche*; Hegel), 238
- Aesthetics* (Hegel), 95, 203
- Allison, Henry E., 17n23, 37n4, 123n13, 126n16,
 127n17, 128n18, 130n20, 132n22, 143n7
- Ameriks, Karl, 243n6, 256n21, 265n43
 on Hegel and epistemology, 13, 21n33
 on Hegel and Kant’s position on contradictions
 of reason, 168n14
 on Hegel’s swimming argument, 142
 on Kant and epistemology, 144n9
 on Kant’s *Transcendental Dialectic*, 16n20
- Antinomies section of *Critique of Pure
 Reason* (Kant)
- argument against rationalism in, 117, 119,
 121–122
 on complete conditions, 117–118, 131, 166,
 168, 187, 197, 219
 on cosmological idea of the world, 122, 168
 on explanatory gap between infinite and finite
 substances, 120
 Hegel and, 166–169, 171–173, 187, 192,
 197–198, 219
 on necessary being outside time, 117
 on necessary conflict, 139
 on possibility of simple or indivisible parts,
 117–118, 124, 167
 principle of sufficient reason and, 117
 on transcendental idealism, 131
 on “ultimate subjects of all composition,” 186
- Argan. *See* Molière
- Aristophanes, 1
- Aristotle, 53n19, 77, 108n37
 argument for law of contradiction and,
 248–249
 on God, 264
 Hegel and, 10, 12, 95–96, 101, 170, 172–173,
 208n10, 213, 248–249, 264
 inner purposiveness and, 92
 metaphysics of, 4, 10, 12, 172–173, 208n10,
 213–214
 philosophy of nature and, 101
 on reason, 213, 240, 248–249
 substance and, 112, 172, 212–213
 substrata and, 213
 teleology and, 95–96, 108n37, 170
- Armstrong, David Malet, 65n11, 70n14, 75,
 145–146, 185
- astrology, 54–55, 58–59, 73
- atomism, 29, 189
- al-Azm, Sadik J., 118nn7–8
- Bacon, Francis, 63
- Bartuschat, Wolfgang, 177n30

- Baum, Manfred, 150n17
 Beebee, Helen, 59, 70n15
Begriffe (immanent concepts). *See also specific concepts*
 “adequate” forms of, 207
 Descartes and, 37, 44
 empiricism and, 52, 62–65
 explanation and, 22, 41, 72–73, 111, 153, 182, 184, 192, 203, 207
 finite things and, 206, 252
 formal concept and, 99–100
 freedom as absolute case of, 230
 Gattung (kind of reproducing individual) and, 98
 gravitation as, 36, 46, 98
 Hume and, 63
 “the idea” (Hegel) and, 200, 203, 206, 209, 211–212, 263
 indifference challenge to, 58
 inertia and, 52–53
 judgment and, 217
 the lawful and, 181–182, 184, 191–195, 199–200, 205, 212
 laws of nature and, 31, 59, 63, 71, 73–75
 life (Hegel) and, 94–95, 98–99, 101, 218
 matter as, 98, 138, 230
 mechanism and, 31, 35–52, 55–57, 74, 237
 metaphysics and, 101, 171, 179, 222, 236
 moments in, 183, 191, 194
 nature, 236
 organisms as, 93, 104, 199, 212
 reality structured by, 23
 soul and, 170
 spirit as universal form of, 222, 227
 substance and, 172, 191, 203, 211–212, 216
 the universal and, 172
 Vorstellung (representation) and, 170, 195
 Beiser, Frederick C., 3n2, 6n9, 20n30, 116n4, 136n1, 148n13, 150n17, 150n19, 171n19, 178n32, 194n7, 208n10, 242n1, 261n34, 262n36
 Berkeley, Bishop George, 175
 Blackburn, Simon, 45–46, 187–190, 192
 Bogdandy, Armin von, 49n16
 Boyle, Robert, 42, 55
 Brandom, Robert, 14n16, 150n18, 185n5
A Brief History of Time (Hawking), 35
 Bristow, William F., 144n9
 Bubner, Rüdger, 244n9, 267–269
 Buchdahl, Gerd, 49n15
 Buller, David J., 108n37
- causality. *See also teleology*
 deflationist views of, 21, 78–80, 82, 84–85, 90, 92–93, 103–104
 efficient causality and, 84, 90, 202
 empiricists’ notion of, 78, 90
 epistemological questions regarding, 79–80, 86–87, 91
 governing and, 67
 holism and, 185
 humeanism and, 68
 inflationary approach to, 79–80, 82, 85–93, 103
 mechanism and, 45–46
 metaphysics and, 8–9, 80, 82
 natural sciences and, 45–46, 68, 78, 81
 of the necessary being outside time, 119
 optimism *versus* pessimism regarding, 79
 reasonable causality and, 45
 reason and, 9, 11, 55, 68
 self-determination of spirit as a special form of, 227
 worldly dependence and, 68
 Chalmers, Alan, 75n17
 Chalmers, David, 185–186, 188, 192
 charity, 28–29
 chemism, 53, 182–183, 191, 194, 206, 209, 237, 249
 concept thesis. *See Begriffe* (immanent concepts)
 concrete universality (token-type relationship), 95–100, 107–108, 202–204
 contradiction
 absolute idea (Hegel) and, 26, 244, 250, 254–255, 258
 abstract negation and, 245–247, 255
 Aristotle on, 248–249
 determinate negation and, 245–247
 dialectical method and, 245
 Hegel on, 192–198, 240–241, 243–250, 252, 255–256, 255–257, 258
 Kant on, 245–246
 the lawful (Hegel) and, 245–247, 255
 life (Hegel) and, 192, 246, 248
 reason and, 197–198
 spirit and, 244, 248, 251
 Copernican revolution, 15–16, 19
 correctness (*Richtigkeit*; Hegel), 250
Critique of Pure Reason (Kant), 5–16, 18–19, 28, 77, 113, 115–123, 126–127, 129–133, 135–136, 144, 165–168, 176, 186, 188, 233. *See also* Antinomies Section; Transcendental Analytic; Transcendental Deduction; Transcendental Dialectic
Critique of the Power of Judgment (Kant), 37, 77, 81–88, 90, 95, 97, 105
 Cummins, Robert, 107
 Curley, Edwin, 174
- de Boer, Karin, 147n12, 171n20, 194n8, 195n9, 247n11
 deflationism
 regarding causality, 21, 78–80, 82, 84–85, 90, 92–93, 103–104
 regarding reason, 124, 134–135, 148, 150, 153, 155, 163–164, 170, 179, 268–270
 Della Rocca, Michael, 131n21, 176n28, 177n30, 189, 259nn26–29

- Descartes, René
 God and, 44
 Hegel and, 44, 214
 inertia and, 53
 matter and, 41, 214
 mechanism and, 37, 42
 substance defined by, 173–174, 210
 substance dualism and, 102, 214
 substantial forms critiqued by, 37, 44
- dialectic
 Hegelian method of, 5, 224–225, 244, 251, 267
 of master and slave, 224–225
- Dialectic. *See* Transcendental Dialectic (Kant)
- Doctrine of Being, 215
- Doctrine of Essence (Hegel), 215–216
- Doppelsatz* (Hegel), 238
- Düsing, Klaus, 20n29, 105n31, 150n17
- efficient causality, 84, 90, 202
- empiricism. *See also* humanism
Begriffe and, 52, 62–65
 causality and, 78, 90
 epistemology and, 61–62, 64, 175–176
 explanation and, 32, 58–59, 62, 73
 gumball machine example and, 64–65
 Hegel and, 57, 60–66, 68–69, 72, 139, 145, 175, 256
 indifference and, 22, 61–62, 72
 intuition and, 60, 62
 Kant on dogmatic forms of, 121
 laws of nature and, 60, 62, 64, 66, 72
 mechanism and, 57
 metaphysics and, 31, 57, 61–62, 65–66, 68–70, 139, 175, 256
 observing consciousness and, 66
 skepticism and, 62–64, 256
- The Encyclopedia Logic* (Hegel), 3, 5, 13, 15, 23–24, 27, 38, 51, 60–63, 66, 69, 72, 92, 94–95, 100–102, 106, 138, 141, 143–144, 149, 155–156, 160, 165, 169, 171, 177, 191–192, 194–195, 197–198, 200, 202, 205, 211–212, 216–217, 220, 225–226, 228–232, 238–239, 241–247, 249–251, 253, 256, 260, 264
- epistemology
 causality and, 79–80, 86–87, 91
 deflationist view of, 235
 empiricism and, 61–62, 64, 175–176
 epistemic necessity and, 26, 248, 250, 255, 260
 epistemological foundationalism and, 268
 epistemological idealism and, 25–26, 234, 238, 265
 epistemological monism and, 178, 217, 221, 234–235, 254, 259, 261–262, 268
 epistemological priority and, 238
 explanation and, 15, 234
 Hegel on, 12–13, 20–21, 23–28, 140–144, 147, 149–150, 153, 155, 164, 179, 184, 196, 203–204, 214, 219, 234–236, 238–241, 248, 254–262, 265–271
 Kant on, 5, 9, 15–21, 86, 111, 113–114, 119, 130–137, 140, 142–144, 146–147, 150, 155–156, 162, 164, 168, 172, 179, 189, 192, 196n10, 198, 204, 206, 218–219, 234, 240, 242–243, 245, 258, 264, 268–270
 metaphysics and, 3, 9n14, 10, 12–13, 21, 51–52, 75, 111, 136–137, 140–143, 149, 266–272
 optimistic forms of, 97, 123, 135, 147–149, 164, 179, 196, 203, 262
 as organizing focus of philosophy, 13
 rationalism and, 175–176
 semantics and, 14–15
- Ethics* (Spinoza), 176, 207
- explanation
 the absolute (Armstrong) and, 145
 absolute idea (Hegel) and, 252–253, 257, 259
Begriffe and, 22, 41, 72–73, 111, 153, 182, 184, 192, 203, 207
 complete explanation and, 18–19, 113–114, 119, 130, 133, 139, 144, 146–148, 150–151, 153, 163, 166, 189, 192, 199, 202–203, 205, 207, 219, 228, 230, 251, 257–259, 262, 271
 context and, 54–55, 75
 correlation and, 51
 empiricism and, 32, 58–59, 62, 73
 epistemology and, 15, 234
 gaps in, 121
 God and, 178
 grounds and, 24, 47, 187–188
 Hegel and, 69–72, 206–209, 219–220, 233–234, 245, 251, 257–259, 261–264
 humanism and, 70–72
 the idea (Hegel) and, 207, 219–220
 inner purposiveness and, 207
 justification and, 7
 Kant on, 112, 204
 the lawful (Hegel) and, 207–209, 221, 227
 laws of nature and, 69–72, 74
 life (Hegel) and, 202, 208, 219–220, 229
 mechanism and, 37–42, 48, 54–57, 74
 metaphysics and, 7–9, 114, 173, 184, 234
Naturzweck and, 81
 non-relational forms of, 42–43
 objective account of, 54–56, 70–73, 234
 prediction and, 7–8, 65
 rationalism and, 114, 119, 209, 259–260
 reason and, 17–18, 23, 73–75, 127–130, 144, 148–150, 156, 163, 167, 197, 213
 relevance condition and, 55, 57, 59, 70, 72–73
 sensory perception and, 139
 subject-predicate judgment and, 156
 substance and, 177, 210, 215
 substrata and, 175, 181, 186–187, 189, 245
 teleology and, 78, 82–85, 90–93, 96–97, 100–107, 208–209
 worldly constraint and, 7
 external purposiveness, 77, 85, 206, 217, 252

- Ferrarin, Alfredo, 213n17, 264n42
 formal ground. *See under* ground
 Förster, Eckart, 89n14, 121n11
 Forster, Michael N., 20n30, 48n13, 61n6, 62n7, 256n21
 foundationalism
 beginnings and, 24
 complete explainers and, 151, 209
 definition of, 5
 eliminativism and, 25
 epistemological foundationalism, 268
 Hegel's rejection of, 5–6, 24–25, 191, 259, 265, 267
 metaphysical foundationalism and, 22, 24, 146, 200, 208, 228, 252, 258–259, 267, 272
 monism and, 6
 scientific foundationalism and, 25
 substance and, 25, 210
 Frankfurt, Harry, 221, 223n4
 Franks, Paul, 20–21n30, 134n24, 150n17, 256n21, 261n35, 264n40
 free will debates, 79–82, 222–225
 fundamentality, 22, 27–28, 68, 208, 272
 Furth, Montgomery, 174–175
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 49n16
 Garber, Daniel, 37n3, 44
Gattung (genus or kind of reproducing individuals), 94–95, 98–99, 126, 183, 228
Geist. *See* spirit (*Geist*)
 Ginsborg, Hannah, 37n4, 81n5, 83n8, 127n17
Gleichgültigkeit. *See* indifference
 God
 absolute idea (Hegel) and, 260
 Aristotle's view of, 264
 Descartes's interpretation of, 44
 Hegel on, 140–142, 171, 260, 263
 initial cause (rational theology) arguments regarding, 43, 45–46, 50, 56, 101
 Kant on, 116–117, 122, 260
 Leibniz on, 116, 258
 ontological arguments regarding, 260, 263
 principle of sufficient reason and, 116, 121, 263
 Spinoza on, 20n30, 112, 116, 120, 176–178, 230, 258–260, 264–265
 supervenience doctrine and, 67
 Godard, Jean-Luc, 1, 24
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 89n14
 gravitation, 36, 46, 53, 60, 98, 126, 220, 237
 Gram, Moltke, 89n14, 121n11
 Grier, Michelle, 17n23, 117n6, 118n8, 126n16, 128n18, 130n20, 135
- grounds
 Blackburn on, 187–189
 categorical properties and, 188–189
 explanation and, 24, 47, 187–188
 force as, 46–47
 formal ground and, 49, 61, 74, 184, 216
 Hegel's critique of the notion of, 9
 hidden forms of, 181
 indeterminate forms of, 163
 indifference and, 48
 the lawful (Hegel) and, 246–247
 laws of nature and, 61, 74
 metaphysical grounding and, 22, 272
 ontological dependence and, 68
 outside of temporal regress, 120–121
 real ground and, 46–47, 61, 74, 84n10, 88, 90, 184, 216–217, 234
 reduction and, 66
 Schaffer on, 68
 single sufficient ground and, 261
 substrata and, 24, 188
 supersensible forms of, 89–90, 92
 ultimate forms of, 120–121
 unconditioned (complete) forms of, 113–115, 117, 119, 148, 162, 166, 174, 176
 Gueroult, Martial, 21n34, 138n5
 Guyer, Paul, 19n27, 20n29, 86n12, 90n16, 130n19, 134n25, 142
- Habermas, Jürgen, 227n11
 Hawking, Stephen, 35
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *See also specific works*
 on antinomies, 122, 246
 Aristotle and, 10, 12, 95–96, 101, 170, 172–173, 208n10, 213, 248–249, 264
 atomism and, 29
 on beginnings, 241–242
 causality and, 45–46
 chemism and, 53, 182–183, 191, 194, 206, 209, 237, 249
 on cognition, 140–141, 256
 on contradiction, 192–198, 240–241, 243–250, 252, 255–256, 255–257, 258
 Copernican Revolution and, 15–16
 Descartes and, 44, 214
 dialectical method of, 5, 224–225, 244, 251, 267
 empiricism and, 57, 60–66, 68–69, 72, 139, 145, 175, 256
 epistemology and, 12–13, 20–21, 23–28, 140–144, 147, 149–150, 153, 155, 164, 179, 184, 196, 203–204, 214, 219, 234–236, 238–241, 248, 254–262, 265–271
 holism and, 11–12, 21, 99, 103, 106, 181–185, 189–192, 214, 258, 264
 inertia and, 53
 the infinite and, 196n10, 205, 231–232, 240, 251–252
 inner purposiveness and, 77
 on the intellect, 143, 149, 204
 interpretive charity regarding, 28–29
 Kant and, 5–7, 9–10, 15–16, 20–22, 24, 27–28, 30, 54, 76, 78, 91–100, 103–106, 111–114, 124, 131, 133, 136–144, 147, 150, 155, 161, 163–172, 190, 196n10, 197–198, 203–205,

- 211, 218–219, 223, 233–234, 238, 240, 242, 245–246, 253, 260, 263–265, 268–272
- laws of nature and, 3–4, 23, 48–49, 51–52, 54, 59–62, 65, 69–75
- Leibniz and, 174
- on the master and the slave, 224–225
- matter and, 41, 214
- mechanism and, 35–42, 44, 46–54, 57, 93, 98, 101, 182, 206, 209, 217, 237, 251
- metaphysics and, 2–5, 9, 11–16, 19–22, 24–33, 51–52, 54, 57, 63, 68–69, 72–73, 76, 78, 91, 93, 99, 101–102, 106, 111–114, 136–142, 145, 149–150, 155–156, 165–167, 170–173, 175, 178–179, 181, 183, 186, 191, 193–194, 199–200, 208n10, 209–211, 213–214, 217–219, 222–223, 227, 232, 234–240, 251–272
- on method, 240–241, 253–254
- monism and, 20, 21n31, 26, 102, 148, 177n30, 178–179, 190–191, 208n10, 214–215, 217, 221, 232n16, 234–235, 241, 254, 259–264, 268
- natural sciences and, 3, 42, 52–54, 59, 78, 91, 105, 107, 183–184, 195, 254
- necessity and, 10
- normativity and, 266
- ontology and, 5, 260
- organizing focus of, 12, 27, 264
- on philosophy's goals, 241–244, 254, 261, 265
- phrenology and, 51
- physics and, 195, 254
- principle of sufficient reason and, 174
- reason in the world and, 10–11, 22–24, 26, 67, 147, 254, 266
- semantics and, 14–15
- social pragmatist readings of, 266
- Spinoza and, 25, 116, 149, 176–177, 190–191, 211, 232, 241, 258, 260–261, 263–264
- on the subject as the "thing-in-itself," 157–158, 179
- sublation (*Aufhebung*) and, 35, 94, 195, 247, 249
- swimming argument and, 13–14, 80, 141–142, 269
- teleology and, 36, 54, 77–78, 91–101, 103–109, 143, 147, 170, 174, 184, 201–202, 204–209, 214, 223, 263
- Hobbes, Thomas, 224
- Hoffman, Paul, 36n2, 53n18
- holism
- Armstrong on, 185
 - causality and, 185
 - Chalmers on, 185
 - global form of, 184
 - Hegel and, 11–12, 21, 99, 103, 106, 181–185, 189–192, 214, 258, 264
 - the idea (Hegel) and, 214
 - insubstantial holism and, 181–182, 184–185, 191–192, 214, 258
 - of the lawful, 184–185, 214
 - of life, 214
 - metaphysics and, 99, 103, 106, 183–185, 214, 258, 264
 - monism and, 190
 - ontology and, 21
 - Russell on, 185
 - substantial holism and, 184, 189, 214, 258
- Houlgate, Stephen, 5n7, 22n37, 138n3, 165n9, 256n20
- Horstmann, Rolf-Peter, 3n2, 6n9, 21n30, 148n13, 165nn9–10, 166n13, 173n23, 230n14, 266n45
- Hume, David. *See also* *humeanism*
- bundle theory of the self and, 175
 - causality and, 81
 - denial of knowledge of necessary connections and, 78–79
 - eliminativism and, 175
 - indifference and, 58–59, 66
- humeanism*
- causality and, 68
 - explanation and, 70–72
 - indifference and, 58–61, 63–66, 70, 72, 78–79
 - laws of nature notion critiqued by, 63–67, 69–72, 74–75, 146
 - metaphysics and, 65–69, 72
 - natural sciences and, 146
 - reason in the world and, 69
 - supervenience and, 58, 67
 - worldly dependence and, 67–69, 72
- the idea (*die Idee*; Hegel). *See also* *absolute idea* (Hegel)
- Begriffe* and, 200, 203, 206, 209, 211–212, 263
 - complete (unconditioned) reason and, 204–205, 238
 - contradiction and, 247–248, 251
 - explanation and, 207, 219–220
 - general account of, 202–205
 - as Hegel's account of reason, 7, 147–148, 198–199
 - holism and, 214
 - inner purposiveness and, 200, 203, 206, 217, 251
 - Kant on, 147
 - the lawful and, 200–201, 206, 233
 - life and, 199–200, 203–204, 219–221, 227–230, 237, 247–248, 251, 255
 - metaphysics and, 199, 218
 - organisms and, 199
 - Spinoza's monism and, 148
 - substance and, 178, 200, 210, 212, 215–217, 262
 - substrata and, 204
 - truth (*Wahrheit*) and, 240, 250–251, 254, 262
- idealism
- epistemological idealism and, 25–26, 234, 238, 265
 - metaphysical idealism and, 25, 232, 238
 - transcendental idealism and, 114, 131

- lting, Karl-Heinz, 206n8
- immanent concepts. *See* *Begriffe* (immanent concepts)
- indifference (*Gleichgültigkeit*)
- as challenge to concepts thesis, 57
 - chemistry and, 182
 - defined as “lack of explanatory relevance,” 38–39
 - empiricism and, 22, 61–62, 72
 - gumball machine example and, 64–65
 - Hegel’s rejection of, 60–61, 78
 - humean (pure) indifference and, 58–61, 63–66, 70, 72, 78–79
 - Kant on, 19–20, 122–124
 - mechanism and, 39, 41, 45, 49–50, 57
 - to metaphysics, 144–145, 271
 - phrenology and, 51
 - Schelling and, 242
 - between subjectivity and objectivity, 242
 - substance and, 163, 177, 190–191
 - substratum and, 102, 156–160, 167, 187, 190, 207–208, 210, 213, 245–246, 251n17, 252, 255, 260
 - to unconditioned reason, 18–19, 114, 122–123, 128, 130, 133, 137, 144
- inertia, 52–53
- inflationism
- regarding causality, 79–80, 82, 85–93, 103
 - regarding reason, 123, 147–148, 150–151, 153, 155, 179–180, 270
- inner purposiveness
- the idea (Hegel) and, 200, 203, 206, 217, 251
 - life (Hegel) and, 202, 204, 207, 218, 229
 - organism and, 97, 201, 204, 212
 - teleology and, 77, 85, 87, 91, 96–97, 103–105
- intellect
- discursive intellect and, 143
 - Hegel on, 143, 149, 204
 - intellectual intuition and, 89n14, 120, 241–242
 - Kant on higher or divine forms of, 88–89, 103, 120–121, 143, 149, 151, 163–164, 204, 218
- interpretive charity, 28–29
- intuition
- empiricism and, 60, 62
 - Hegel on, 242
 - immediate form of, 149–150n17
 - intellectual intuition, 89n14, 120, 241–242
 - Kant on, 89n14, 131–134, 204, 242
 - laws of nature and, 60, 62
 - sensible intuition and, 131–134, 143, 168, 204
 - teleology and, 89
- Inwood, Michael J., 40n5, 48n13, 61n6, 161n5, 166n12, 178n32, 196n12, 259n28
- Jacobi, Carl Gustav, 28, 241–242, 270
- judgment
- Begriffe* and, 217
 - final subject of, 157, 159, 161–162, 167, 170, 186, 188
- Kant on, 81, 132
- normativity and, 99
 - reality’s correspondence with the form of, 24
 - subject-predicate (SP) judgment, 155–160, 164–165, 168–169, 176, 183, 186–187, 193
 - teleology and, 81–84, 90, 92, 127n17, 147
 - understanding and, 81
- Kant, Immanuel. *See also* Antinomies section of Transcendental Dialectic (Kant); Transcendental Dialectic (Kant); *specific works*
- on cognition (*Erkenntnis*), 132, 142
 - on contradiction, 245–246
 - Copernican Revolution and, 15, 19
 - epistemology and, 5, 9, 15–21, 86, 111, 113–114, 119, 130–137, 140, 142–144, 146–147, 150, 155–156, 162, 164, 168, 172, 179, 189, 192, 196n10, 198, 204, 206, 218–219, 234, 240, 242–243, 245, 258, 264, 268–270
 - on God, 116–117, 122, 260
 - Hegel and, 5–7, 9–10, 15–16, 20–22, 24, 27–28, 30, 54, 76, 78, 91–100, 103–106, 111–114, 124, 131, 133, 136–144, 147, 150, 155, 161, 163–172, 190, 196n10, 197–198, 203–205, 211, 218–219, 223, 233–234, 238, 240, 242, 245–246, 253, 260, 263–265, 268–272
 - inner purposiveness and, 77
 - on knowledge (*Wissen*), 132
 - laws of nature and, 70n15
 - Leibniz and, 188
 - mechanism and, 37, 100
 - metaphysics and, 4–6, 9, 16–17, 19, 21–22, 24, 26–27, 32–33, 76, 78, 93, 111–140, 142–143, 146–147, 150, 156, 165, 167, 172, 210, 213–214, 218, 264, 271–272
 - monism and, 264
 - natural sciences and, 78, 86, 91, 129–130, 133, 145
 - ontology and, 260
 - on political authority, 19
 - problem of complete reasons and, 111, 113–115
 - on rationalism, 116–117, 119–121, 130–133, 139, 161
 - reason described by, 7, 16–20, 24, 32, 111, 113–114, 124–135, 144–148, 150, 161–164, 166, 170, 172, 194n8, 197–198, 205, 211, 233, 242, 268 (*See also* epistemology)
 - on the subject as the “thing in itself,” 157, 162–163, 190
 - on substance, 116, 161–163, 167–168, 188
 - teleology and, 32, 77, 81–91, 94–100, 103–107, 109, 147, 223, 263
 - transcendental idealism and, 114, 131
 - on unconditioned grounds, 115, 268
- Kim, Jaegwon, 8n12, 55n20, 68n13, 234n21
- Kitcher, Philip, 8n11, 19n27, 70n15, 130n19, 233n19

- Langton, Rae, 134n23, 157n2, 163n8, 190
- the lawful (Hegel)
- absolute idea (Hegel) and, 234, 246–247
 - the actual and, 238
 - contradiction and, 245–247, 255
 - explanation and, 207–209, 221, 227
 - grounds and, 246–247
 - holism of, 184–185, 214
 - sublation (*Aufhebung*) and, 247
 - teleology and, 205–207
- laws of nature
- Armstrong on, 145–146
 - Begriffe* and, 31, 59, 63, 71, 73–75
 - commitment to universals and, 146
 - empiricism and, 60, 62, 64, 66, 72
 - explanation and, 69–72, 74
 - gumball machine example and, 64–65
 - Hegel on, 3–4, 23, 48–49, 51–52, 54, 59–62, 65, 69–75
 - humeanism and, 63–67, 69–72, 74–75, 146
 - intuition and, 60, 62
 - mechanism and, 48–54, 56, 74, 90
 - reason and, 59–60, 139
 - supervenience and, 67
 - worldly dependence and, 67
- Lectures on Logic* (Hegel), 51, 65, 101, 194, 217, 232, 264
- Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Hegel), 25, 95, 258, 260, 270
- Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (Hegel), 3, 10, 23, 37, 41, 44, 50, 60, 62–63, 77, 95, 101, 106, 172, 175–177, 242, 257, 264
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm
- epistemology and, 248
 - on extension, 46
 - on God, 116, 258
 - Hegel and, 174
 - Kant's interpretation of, 188
 - monads and, 115, 118–119, 174–175
 - principle of contradiction and, 248
 - principle of sufficient reason and, 118–120, 174, 258
 - on substance, 188
- Lewis, David, 50n17, 58, 67, 70
- life (Hegel's concept of)
- absolute idea (Hegel) and, 229, 246
 - Begriffe* and, 94–95, 98–99, 101, 218
 - concrete universality and, 95–100, 107–108, 202–204
 - contradiction in, 192, 246, 248
 - death and, 231
 - explanation and, 202, 208, 219–220, 229
 - the idea (Hegel) and, 199–200, 203–204, 219–221, 227–230, 237, 247–248, 251, 255
 - immediacy and, 100, 104
 - inner purposiveness and, 202, 204, 207, 218, 229
 - the lawful (Hegel) and, 206–207
 - from lifeless matter, 105
 - living beings contrasted with, 201
 - monism and, 215
 - necessary assimilation and, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102–103, 106, 212
 - normativity and, 98
 - possibility of malfunction and, 98, 251
 - presupposition and, 100
 - reproduction and, 94–96, 98, 100, 103, 106–107, 228
 - self-preservation activities and, 94–96, 98, 102, 200–201, 212, 219
 - spirit (*geist*) contrasted with, 251
 - substance and, 211–215
 - substrata and, 203, 207
 - teleology and, 94–95, 98, 209, 248, 263
 - whole-part relations and, 94
- linguistic-turn philosophy, 29
- Locke, John, 156–157, 175
- Loewer, Barry, 59, 67, 70n16
- Logic* (Hegel). *See Science of Logic* (Hegel)
- Longuenesse, Béatrice, 61n6, 150n17, 161n4, 187n6, 216n20
- Lumsden, Simon, 63n9
- MacFarland, John D., 81n5, 85n11, 86, 90n16
- Marcuse, Herbert, 184, 202n5, 204n6, 206n21, 251n15, 265n43
- McCumber, John, 60n4
- McLaughlin, Peter, 37n4, 81n5, 83n7, 90n16
- McTaggart, John, 148n13, 183n4, 206n8, 215n18, 229n13, 246n10, 263n38
- mechanism
- astrology and, 54–55
 - Begriffe* and, 31, 35–52, 55–57, 74, 237
 - causality and, 45–46
 - chemism and, 182
 - clock example and, 42
 - correlation and, 51
 - determinism and, 39
 - dialectical approach to, 35
 - explanation and, 37–42, 48, 54–57, 74
 - forces and, 46–49, 52–54, 56, 74
 - fundamentalist mechanism and, 101
 - Hegel and, 35–42, 44, 46–54, 57, 93, 98, 101, 182, 206, 209, 217, 237, 251
 - homogeneous mechanism and, 53, 217
 - indifference and, 39, 41, 45, 49–50, 57
 - inertia and, 52–53
 - infinite regress argument and, 40–41, 43, 46, 48–50, 74
 - Kant and, 37, 100
 - laws and, 48–54, 56, 74, 90
 - lock example and, 42, 55–56
 - material mechanism and, 87
 - matter and, 36, 41–48, 50, 52, 56, 74, 98, 206, 237
 - metaphysics and, 42
 - natural sciences and, 41–43, 45–46, 56
 - pure (conceptless) mechanism and, 35–46, 49–50, 54–56, 74

- mechanism (*cont.*)
- reasonable mechanism and, 35–36, 45, 49–54
 - reason in the world and, 31, 74
 - scientific foundationalism and, 25
 - sensibilization of reason and, 42, 46–47
 - solar system example and, 36
 - striving and, 53
 - teleology and, 36, 94, 100, 103, 209, 214
 - turtle example and, 35, 43–44, 47, 49–50
 - underlying chemical processes and, 102
- mediated immediacy, 102
- metacognition, 141
- metaphilosophy, 13–15, 80
- metaphysics
- aim of, 1–3
 - Aristotle's account of, 4, 10, 12, 172–173, 208n10, 213–214
 - Armstrong's account of, 145–146
 - Begriffe* and, 101, 171, 179, 222, 236
 - causality and, 8–9, 80, 82
 - compatibilism and, 101–103, 214
 - empiricism and, 31, 57, 61–62, 65–66, 68–70, 139, 175, 256
 - epistemology and, 3, 9n14, 10, 12–13, 21, 51–52, 75, 111, 136–137, 140–143, 149, 266–272
 - explanation and, 7–9, 114, 173, 184, 234
 - Hegel's account of, 2–5, 9, 11–16, 19–22, 24–33, 51–52, 54, 57, 63, 68–69, 72–73, 76, 78, 91, 93, 99, 101–102, 106, 111–114, 136–142, 145, 149–150, 155–156, 165–167, 170–173, 175, 178–179, 181, 183, 186, 191, 193–194, 199–200, 208n10, 209–211, 213–214, 217–219, 222–223, 227, 232, 234–240, 251–272
 - holism and, 99, 103, 106, 183–185, 214, 258, 264
 - humanism and, 65–69, 72
 - idealism and, 232
 - judgment premise and, 160
 - Kant's account of, 4–6, 9, 16–17, 19, 21–22, 24, 26–27, 32–33, 76, 78, 93, 111–140, 142–143, 146–147, 150, 156, 165, 167, 172, 210, 213–214, 218, 264, 271–272
 - the lawful (Hegel) and, 234
 - materialism and, 3
 - metaphysical foundationalism and, 22, 24, 146, 200, 208, 228, 252, 258–259, 265, 267, 272
 - metaphysical monism and, 20, 146, 190, 259–262, 264
 - metaphysical priority and, 232, 235–236, 238–239, 252, 260, 262
 - objectional metaphysics and, 65–66
 - ontology and, 5
 - rationalism and, 18, 114–115, 123–124, 126, 132–133, 148, 150–151, 175, 209–210, 259
 - of reason, 1–7, 9–12, 15, 19–20, 22, 24–25, 27, 31–33, 51, 57, 62, 65, 68–69, 72, 75–76, 78, 93, 111, 113, 135–140, 144, 147, 155, 173, 184, 189, 210–211, 214, 217–219, 221, 227, 232, 235, 237, 253, 257, 261, 266–267
 - semantics and, 14
 - skepticism and, 2, 64
 - substance and, 165, 180, 211, 218, 223, 227, 265–266
 - Teleology and, 4
 - of the understanding, 165–166, 170, 173, 175, 181, 186, 191, 193–194, 263
 - worldly dependence and, 68
- Metaphysics* (Aristotle), 213, 240, 248
- Millikan, Ruth Garrett, 108
- Molière, 2, 125–127, 129–130
- Molnar, George, 42n9, 53n19, 75
- monism
- contradiction and, 247
 - epistemological monism and, 178, 217, 221, 234–235, 254, 259, 261–262, 268
 - existence monism and, 177n30, 264
 - extended bodies and, 174–175
 - Hegel and, 20, 21n31, 26, 102, 148, 177n30, 178–179, 190–191, 208n10, 214–215, 217, 221, 232n16, 234–235, 241, 254, 259–264, 268
 - Leibniz and, 115, 118–119, 174–175
 - metaphysical monism and, 20, 146, 190, 259–262, 264
 - the One and, 20, 247, 261–262
 - organic monism and, 229, 263
 - perceptions of, 174
 - principle of sufficient reason and, 115
 - priority monism, 177n30, 264
 - rationalist monism and, 208n10, 241, 261–264
 - Spinoza and, 6, 20, 24n40, 148, 178, 190–191, 241, 259–263
 - substance monism and, 6, 214–215, 232n16
 - whole-part relations and, 190, 263
- Mr. Incurious. *See* Molière
- natural purpose concept. *See* *Naturzweck*
- natural sciences
- causality and, 45–46, 68, 78, 81
 - Hegel and, 3, 42, 52–54, 59, 78, 91, 105, 107, 183–184, 195, 254
 - humanism and, 146
 - Kant and, 78, 86, 91, 129–130, 133, 145
 - mechanism and, 41–43, 45–46, 56
- Naturzweck* (“natural purpose,” Kant)
- appeal to the history of a species and, 102n32
 - assimilation and, 94
 - concrete universality as response to, 99
 - explanation and, 81
 - as features of biological organisms, 81–82
 - merely logical possibility of, 87–89, 103, 106
 - reproduction and, 94
 - self-organization requirement and, 85, 89, 96–97
 - teleology and, 81–85, 94
 - whole-part relations and, 84–85, 97
 - Zweck* (end) and, 86–87
- Neander, Karen, 107

- Neiman, Susan, 134–135
 Newlands, Samuel, 178n31
 Newton, Isaac, 47, 53, 90n15
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 173
 normativity, 11, 266
- the One, 20, 247, 261–263. *See also* Monism
 ontology, 5, 21, 260, 263
 organism. *See also* life (Hegel)
 as *Begriff*, 93, 104, 199, 212
 empirical evidence concerning, 97
 inner purposiveness and, 97, 201, 204, 212
 Kant and, 82, 89n14
 malfunction and, 98, 108
 mediated immediacy and, 102
 Naturzweck and, 81–82
 problem of constant development of, 89n14
 as “real end” (*Zweck*), 201, 212
 reproduction and, 95, 223
 self-organization and, 95–97
 self-preservation and, 212, 222
 teleology and, 90–91, 93, 101, 105–106, 201,
 213, 223, 263
 token-type relationship and, 214
 organizing focus, 11–13, 27, 264
 Ott, Walter R., 42n9
- pain, 188
Phenomenology of Spirit (Hegel), 5, 27–28, 48, 51,
 59, 61, 63, 65–66, 70, 141–142, 149, 178, 183,
 201, 212, 232, 241–243, 253, 258
Philosophical Propaedeutic (Hegel), 28, 95
Philosophy of Mind (Hegel), 169–170, 210, 220,
 222–227, 236, 251, 265
Philosophy of Nature (Hegel), 36, 46–47, 77,
 93–95, 97–98, 102, 105–106, 226, 236, 257
Philosophy of Right (Hegel), 199, 222–223, 225,
 227, 238
Philosophy of Spirit (Hegel), 220–222, 224–225,
 227, 230, 244, 269
 phenomenology, 51, 58–59, 73
 Pinkard, Terry, 16n20, 22n37, 28n43, 169n16,
 215n19, 217n22, 224n7, 227n12, 266n46
 Pippin, Robert, 61n5, 138n3, 150n18, 206n9,
 215n19, 224n7, 252n18, 265n44, 268n48
 on the absoluteness of spirit’s
 self-knowledge, 258n24
 on “counted as occurring in nature”
 versus “counted as sufficient
 explanation,” 8–9n13
 on extension of a Kantian transcendental
 deduction of the conditions of the possibility
 of cognition of objects, 253n19
 on Hegel and inner purposiveness, 266n45
 on Hegel and the Copernican
 Revolution, 16n19
 on Hegel’s “unified project,” 6n8
 on Kant and skepticism, 21n32
 on non-metaphysical character of the
 Natur-Geist distinction, 227n12
 positivism, 7–8, 73, 126–127, 144–145
 pragmatism, 127
 Priest, Graham, 196n10
 principle of sufficient reason (PSR)
 Armstrong and, 145
 from contingency, 118
 definition of, 115
 Della Rocca on, 189
 determinacy and, 264
 extended bodies and, 175
 God, 116, 121, 263
 Hegel and, 174
 Kant and, 116–117, 121
 Leibniz and, 118–120, 174, 258
 Spinoza and, 116, 259, 263
 strong PSR *vs.* weak PSR and, 121
 ultimate reason and, 115–116
 prisoner’s dilemma games, 129
Prolegomena (Kant), 161–163
 Proops, Ian, 17n22, 125n14, 162nn6–7
 purposiveness. *See* external purposiveness; inner
 purposiveness
- Quante, Michael, 221n1, 223nn3–4
 Quine, William Van Orman, 37
- Railton, Peter, 7n10, 64n10
- rationalism
 deflationary views of reason and, 124
 divine mind and, 120
 dogmatism and, 132, 139
 epistemology and, 175–176
 explanation and, 114, 119, 209, 259–260
 Hegel and, 139, 175, 177n30, 259–260, 262
 inflationary views of reason and, 123
 Kant on, 116–117, 119–121, 130–133, 139, 161
 metaphysics and, 18, 114–115, 123–124, 126,
 132–133, 148, 150–151, 175, 209–210, 259
 principle of sufficient reason (PSR) and,
 115–119, 121, 131, 145, 174–175, 189, 259,
 263–264
 rational cosmology and, 117
 rationalist affirmation and, 114–122, 131
 rationalist monism and, 208n10, 241, 261–264
 real ground. *See under* ground
 reason (*Vernunft*)
 Aristotle on, 213, 240, 248–249
 causality and, 9, 11, 55, 68
 complete or unconditioned forms of, 27, 54,
 111–112, 114, 122–123, 124, 128–131,
 135, 137, 149, 153, 155–156, 161, 163–164,
 166–167, 172, 179–180, 187, 192, 197–198,
 200, 204–205, 207, 209, 219, 230, 232,
 235, 237–239, 243–244, 255, 258–259,
 261–262, 269
 conditions and, 18–19, 125–129, 233

- reason (*cont.*)
 contradiction and, 197–198
 deflationary views of, 124, 134–135, 148, 150, 153, 155, 163–164, 170, 179, 268–270
 explanation and, 17–18, 23, 73–75, 127–130, 144, 148–150, 156, 163, 167, 197, 213
 guidance and, 125–126, 128, 130, 133, 242
 Hegel's account of, 17, 22–24, 26–27, 59–60, 137–138, 144, 147–151, 153, 155–156, 163–164, 166–168, 170, 172, 174–175, 179–181, 196–200, 204–207, 211, 214, 219, 230, 233–235, 237–242, 244, 246, 248–250, 254–256, 258–261, 264, 269
 indifference and, 58
 inflationary views of, 123, 147–148, 150–151, 153, 155, 179–180, 270
 Kant's account of, 7, 16–20, 24, 32, 111, 113–114, 124–135, 144–148, 150, 161–164, 166, 170, 172, 194n8, 197–198, 205, 211, 233, 242, 268
 Kant's "true subject" and, 161–162
 laws of nature and, 59–60, 139
 metaphysics of, 1–7, 9–12, 15, 20, 22, 24–25, 27, 31–33, 51, 57, 62, 65, 68–69, 72, 75–76, 78, 93, 111, 113, 135–140, 144, 147, 155, 173, 184, 189, 210–211, 214, 217–219, 221, 227, 232, 235, 237, 253, 257, 261, 266–267
 modern sciences and, 31, 42
 pragmatism and, 127
 principle of sufficient reason (PSR) and, 115–119, 121, 131, 145, 174–175, 189, 259, 263–264
 prisoner's dilemma games and, 129
 sensibilization of, 42, 46–47, 68
 substrata and, 102, 259, 264
 teleological forms of, 77
 teleological *versus* non-teleological forms of, 9, 36
 truth (*Wahrheit*) and, 250
 ultimate reason and, 116
 in the world, 3–4, 8–11, 17, 22–24, 31–32, 36, 41–42, 50, 54–57, 67–68, 73–75, 77, 102, 125, 147, 235, 237, 241, 254, 266
 Redding, Paul, 14n17, 16n19, 22n37, 196n11, 217n22
 representation. *See* *Vorstellung*
 Richardson, John, 108n37
 Rohlf, Michael, 16n20, 17n21
 Rosen, Michael, 21n34
 Russell, Bertrand, 185, 190–191
 Rutherford, Donald P., 174nn25–26
 Schaffer, Jonathan, 22n36, 41n6, 66, 68, 146, 177n30, 208n10, 260n33, 264n39
 Schelling, Friedrich, 178, 242
 Schlegel, Friedrich, 270
 Schopenhauer, Arthur, 43
Science of Logic (Hegel), 3–7, 9, 11–12, 14, 21, 24–28, 27, 36, 38–40, 44–49, 52–54, 57, 60–61, 70, 72, 91, 93–94, 97–102, 104–106, 108, 137–138, 140, 147–149, 153, 157–158, 164, 167–168, 170–172, 174–177, 179, 181–184, 189, 191, 194–207, 209, 211–212, 215–217, 219–221, 226–232, 235–241, 243–258, 260–270
 Sellars, Wilfrid, 63
 semantics, 14–15
 Sextus, 62
 Siep, Ludwig, 20n29, 61n5, 75n17, 150n19, 224n6, 224n8, 266n47
 skepticism
 ancient skepticism and, 62, 256–257
Begriffe and, 52
 empiricism and, 62–64, 256
 Hegel and, 12, 63–64, 145, 235, 256–257
 Hume and, 62–64
 Kant and, 21n32, 25, 81–82, 91–92, 105, 114, 123, 130–131, 147, 233, 268
 mechanism and, 45
 mediation skepticism and, 63–64
 semantics and, 14
 skeptical hopelessness and, 114, 122, 130, 139, 233, 268
 teleology and, 96–97, 105, 147
 thinking skepticism and, 257
 toward political authority, 19
 Sober, Elliot, 108n35
 Socrates, 1
 soul
 assimilation ability and, 104
Begriffe and, 170
 Frankfurt and, 221
 Hegel on, 104, 105n31, 122, 156, 168–171, 231–232, 252
 the infinite and, 232, 252
 Kant on, 122, 161–162, 168–169
 soul substance and, 161–162, 168–169, 173, 220–221
 as substrate, 169–170, 221
 Spinoza, Baruch
 on finite things, 149, 178, 263
 foundationalism and, 25
 on God, 20n30, 112, 116, 120, 176–178, 230, 258–260, 264–265
 Hegel and, 25, 116, 149, 176–177, 190–191, 211, 232, 241, 258, 260–261, 263–264
 on inadequate causes, 207
 Kant and, 116
 metaphysics and, 112, 156, 211, 259–261, 265
 monism and, 6, 20, 24n40, 148, 178, 190–191, 241, 259–263
 principle of sufficient reason and, 116, 259, 263
 substance and, 26, 120, 151, 156, 176–177, 211, 230, 232, 259–261
 spirit (*Geist*)
 absolute idea and, 25–26, 226, 244, 252, 257–258, 265
 Absolute Spirit and, 225–226
 as *Begriff*, 220, 222
 contradictions and, 244, 248, 251
 dialectical method and, 244

- epistemology and, 236
 freedom and, 23, 220–223, 228, 236
 free will and, 222–223
 infinity and, 231–232
 in and for itself quality of, 241, 248, 251, 264
 life and, 251
 logical sense of, 251–252, 257–258
 metaphysics and, 227, 232, 236
 natural life contrasted with, 106n33, 223,
 226–227, 231, 235–236, 251
 objective spirit and, 223–225
 subjective spirit and, 222–223
 substance and, 232
 teleology and, 226–227
 thinking and, 244
- Stern, Robert, 5n6, 15n18, 22n37, 49n15, 165n9,
 166n13, 168n15, 172, 183n3, 194n7, 215n19,
 232n17, 238n23, 259n29
- striving, 53
- subject-predicate judgment. *See under* judgment
- sublation (*Aufhebung*), 35, 94, 195, 247, 249
- substance
 absolute idea and, 231, 251
 Aristotle on, 112, 172, 212–213
Begriffe and, 172, 191, 203, 211–212, 216
 change and, 212–213, 215–217
 Descartes on, 37, 44, 102, 173–174, 210, 214
 determinacy and, 261
 Doctrine of Being and, 215
 Doctrine of Essence (Hegel) and, 215–216
 empiricism and, 175
 explanation and, 177, 210, 215
 foundationalism and, 25, 210
 Hegel on, 157–158, 163, 166–167, 171–172,
 176–180, 190–191, 200, 210–218, 232–233,
 261, 263
 the idea (Hegel) and, 178, 200, 210, 212,
 215–217, 262
 indifferent forms of, 163, 177, 190–191
 infinite forms of, 120
 Kant on, 116, 161–163, 167–168, 188
 the lawful (Hegel) and, 233
 laws of nature and, 191
 Leibniz on, 188
 living beings and, 101, 104, 108, 211, 213
 metaphysics and, 165, 180, 211, 218, 223, 227,
 265–266
 monism and, 6, 214–215, 232n16
 Nietzsche on, 173
 outside the physical world, 190
 reason in the world and, 24, 102, 215
 Russell on, 190–191
 soul substance and, 161–162, 168–169, 173,
 220–221
 Spinoza on, 26, 120, 151, 156, 176–177, 211,
 230, 232, 259–261
 spirit (*geist*) and, 232
 substrata and, 155–159, 161–163, 167, 169,
 171–177, 179, 190, 210, 212–213, 220, 232
 teleology and, 214
 substrata and substrates
 absolute forms of, 155–156
 antinomies and, 230
 dispositions and, 186–189
 explanation and, 175, 181, 186–187, 189, 245
 freedom of the will and, 223
 grounds and, 24, 188
 Hegel on, 160–161, 171, 179–182, 189–192,
 203–205, 207, 210, 212–214, 223, 230, 232,
 245, 260, 263
 hidden or unknown forms of, 25, 155–156,
 164, 187
 indifferent forms of, 102, 156–160, 167, 187,
 190, 207–208, 210, 213, 245–246, 251n17,
 252, 255, 260
 the infinite and, 252
 judgment-argument *versus* dependence
 argument regarding, 159–160
 Kant on, 179, 190, 198
 metaphysics and, 173, 179, 210, 218, 227, 246
 Naturzweck (Kant) and, 88
 nonexplanatory forms of, 102, 155–156
 reason and, 102, 259, 264
 soul as, 169–170, 221
 subject-predicate judgment and, 24
 substance and, 155–159, 161–163, 167, 169,
 171–177, 179, 190, 210, 212–213, 220, 232
 supersensible forms of, 89–90, 92–93,
 103–104
 teleology and, 204
 unification and, 159
- Suchting, Wallace A., 65n11
- swimming argument (Hegel), 13–14, 80,
 141–142, 269
- teleology
 Arctic ecosystem example and, 83–85
 Aristotle and, 95–96, 108n37, 170
 artifact teleology and, 95–96, 107
Begriffe and, 31, 108
 brute teleology and, 91, 100, 104
 explanation and, 78, 82–85, 90–93, 96–97,
 100–107, 208–209
 external purposiveness and, 77, 85, 206,
 217, 252
 Hegel and, 36, 54, 77–78, 91–101, 103–109,
 143, 147, 170, 174, 184, 201–202, 204–209,
 214, 223, 263
 heuristics and, 90
 holism and, 184
 inner purposiveness and, 77, 85, 87, 91, 96–97,
 103–105
 judgment and, 81–84, 90, 92, 127n17, 147
 Kant and, 32, 77, 81–91, 94–100, 103–107, 109,
 147, 223, 263
 the lawful (Hegel) and, 205–207
 Leibniz and, 174
 life (Hegel) and, 94–95, 98, 209, 248, 263
 living beings and, 90–91, 93, 101, 105–106
 matter and material system considerations in,
 87–88, 99, 103

- teleology (*Cont.*)
 mechanism and, 36, 94, 100, 103, 209, 214
 natural selection and, 90–91, 105, 107–108
 natural teleology and, 31–32, 78–81, 85–94, 97, 99–100, 104–107, 143, 147, 204, 263
 Naturzweck and, 81–85, 94
 necessity and, 201–202
 neo-teleologists and, 107–108
 normativity and, 83, 98–99, 108
 organisms and, 90–91, 93, 101, 105–106, 201, 213, 223, 263
 originating representation of the concept
 requirement and, 86–87, 92–93, 96–98, 103–104
 reason in the world and, 4, 26, 32, 77
 scientific foundationalism and, 25
 skepticism and, 96–97, 105, 147
 soul and, 170
 the spirit (Hegel) and, 226–227
 sui generis teleology and, 78, 91
 Theunissen, Michael, 147n12, 161n4, 169n16, 170n17, 171n20, 210n13
 Thompson, Michael, 106n34
 Transcendental Analytic (Kant), 21, 136, 138, 144, 150, 264–265
 Transcendental Deduction (Kant), 6, 21
 Transcendental Dialectic (Kant). *See also*
 Antinomies section of the Transcendental Dialectic
 on completeness of reason, 54
 contemporary metaphysics' vulnerability to critique in, 145–146
 Hegel and, 6, 10, 21, 54, 136–141, 143–144, 147, 150, 153, 155, 171–173, 194n8, 200, 203, 211, 214, 217n22, 218–219, 233, 242, 253, 260, 264–265, 268
 on the idea of restriction in knowledge, 134
 metaphysical nature of the critique in, 4–7, 9, 16–17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 32–33, 76, 111–114, 116–117, 130, 135–139, 142, 218, 271
 on natural science's need for reason's guidance, 126
 on necessary conflicts, 138–140, 142, 155, 214, 253
 principle of sufficient reason (PSR) and, 263
 on reason and conflict, 16–19, 243
 on reason's concern with the unconditioned, 123
Treatise (Hume), 175
 true infinite, 251–252
 truth (*Wahrheit*)
 correctness (*Richtigkeit*) contrasted with, 250
 the idea as, 240, 250–251, 254, 262
 reason and, 250

Vernunft. *See* reason
Vorstellung (representation), 170, 195, 250

 Wallace, Robert M., 223n3, 250n14
 Walsh, William Henry, 123–124, 126–128, 130
 Warren, Daniel, 134n24
 Westphal, Kenneth R., 16n19, 21n31, 21n33, 22n37, 49n15, 149n15, 183n3, 232n17, 242n1
 Wilson, Margaret, 67, 248
 Winkler, Kenneth P., 58n1
 Wolff, Michael, 169n16, 170n18, 194–195n8, 210n13, 213n16, 250n13
 Wood, Allen, 223n3
 worldly dependence, 67–69, 72–73
 Wright, Larry, 84n9

 Yovel, Yirmiyahu, 24n40

 Zanetti, Véronique, 81n5
 Zimmerman, Dean, 22n35
 Zeno, 247